

SECTION 15

MORTUARY

Statement of Purpose

By Illinois State Law, county coroners/medical examiners are responsible for the dead. The purpose of this annex is to identify how the mortuary responsibility for a mass fatality will be handled in Sangamon County. State-wide assistance is available to county coroners/medical examiners for a mass fatality, but local guidelines must be adhered to.

Organization

A. State

The parties responsible for state-wide notification and/or coordination of the mortuary activities will be the Illinois Funeral Directors Association (IFDA) and Illinois Coroners and Medical Examiners Association (ICME).

B. Local

By law, county coroners/medical examiners are responsible for the dead. The IFDA and ICMEA, when activated will be available to assist under the direction of the county coroner/medical examiner.

Concept of Operation

When disaster conditions permit and an estimate can be made of the dead in the counties and districts, temporary morgue sites will be established where justified. Remains will be recovered and evacuated to the temporary morgues for identification purposes and safeguarding of personal effects found on the dead. When authorized by officials and the family, the Mortuary Personnel shall prepare, process and release the remains for final disposition. Only when registered burial sites are exhausted, losses are massive, and as a last resort, interment may be in burial areas selected by local, county, and/or state officials.

The Illinois Coroners and Medical Examiners Association, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and the Illinois Funeral Directors Association have established a Memorandum of Understanding for a cooperative arrangement covering those relationships, policies and activities in which the IFDA may conduct operations in support of IEMA at the direction of members of ICMEA.

MULTI-DEATH DISASTER SITUATIONS

I. Mortuary Personnel Focus

To establish the means and methods for the sensitive and respectful care and handling of deceased human remains in multi-death situations, Mortuary Personnel will be assigned to be available to aid in the necessary acts of recovery, evacuation, identification (sanitation and preservation such as preparation or embalming as authorized), notification of the next of kin, counseling and facilitating the release of identified remains to the next of kin or their representative under the direction of authorized persons.

II. Assumption

A major earthquake in the Central United States, as an example, could affect an area as vast as 21 Midwestern states, or up to 40% of all states. Any major earthquake or other disaster may result in extensive property damage and possibly a large number of deaths which may require extraordinary procedures.

III. Concept of Operations

When multiple deaths occur, and when requested by the coroner/medical examiner, ICMEA and/or IFDA will aid in estimating the number of dead. When required, temporary morgue site(s) will be selected and activated. The coroner/medical examiner will, if needed, request Sangamon County Department of Public Health to assist with mortuary care in any means deemed necessary. The remains will be recovered and taken to the morgue site for identification and sanitary preservation in preparation for final disposition as designated by the coroner/medical examiner. Personal effects on the remains will be collected and kept in a secure place. Necessary information about each victim will be compiled and processed by the coroner/medical examiner.

IV. Direction and Control

In all disaster situations, direction and control rests with local officials. When a multi-death disaster occurs, the coroner/medical examiner should immediately contact IFDA and ICMEA for assistance that is needed locally. See Appendix 2 for telephone numbers to be used for making such contact.

A. Initial Recovery and Staging Operations Guidelines

1. None of the remains shall be moved or touched by workers until direction and approval have been given by the coroner/medical examiner or the appropriate person with sphere of control.
2. Operations will be coordinated by the coroner/medical examiner.
3. A survey and assessment of the situation will be made by the coroner/medical examiner. They will note the approximate number of dead, condition of the remains, environmental conditions, type of terrain, and identify equipment, personnel and supplies needed to implement an effective plan.
4. Once workers have reported to the staging area, a briefing will be held, assignments will be given, and, if appropriate, workers will be divided into teams.
5. Photos or a sketch will be made of the disaster site, and, if applicable, the scene will be divided into sections, with the recovery teams assigned to a particular section.
6. Suitable stakes or markings will be placed at the location of each body, and a number will be assigned to each body or collection of body parts as directed by the coroner/medical examiner or his designated appointee.
7. Remains, or remain parts, will be tagged and records kept as to the location and/or surroundings in which the remains were found.
8. Unattached personal effects found on or near the body will be placed in a container and tagged with corresponding numbers and data reflecting the location and/or surroundings.
9. When practical, remains and/or remain parts will be containerized, most probably in a body pouch, and tagged with a corresponding number on each pouch.
10. Valuables, such as wallets or jewelry, that are attached to the body shall not be removed. Such valuables found on or near the body that have potential identification value should be placed in a container and charted as to the exact location where they were recovered.
11. Remains may then be removed, as authorized, from their initial discovery site to a staging area for transporting to a temporary morgue site. This initial movement may require litters, stretchers, or other specialized removal equipment.

B. Evacuation to Morgue Operational Guidelines

1. Evacuation operations from the disaster site or staging area will be coordinated by the coroner/medical examiner or designated personnel.
2. A survey and assessment of the situation will be made by the coroner/medical examiner.
3. Before operations begin, a briefing may be held and assignments and directions given.
4. The transfer of remains to the temporary morgue shall be handled discreetly, with due regard and respect for the sensitive care of the human body, and wherever possible, "closed" vehicles should be used.
5. All names on vehicles used for transport will be covered (or removed) whenever possible.
6. Vehicles should travel the same route from the handling site to the morgue area. This route will be established in coordination with the local traffic control agency(s).
7. Vehicles are to travel at a moderate speed, in convoy style, maintaining order and dignity.
8. Records will be kept at the staging area as to the identification of the vehicle and its driver, as well as the tag number of the deceased being transported.
9. Dispatchers and evacuation drivers will take care to optimize the temporary morgue receiving units capacity for processing remains.

C. Temporary Morgue Site

1. A morgue site is to be selected, organized, and put into operation if the number of dead exceeds the resources of the Coroner's office. The coroner/medical examiner may ask the Mortuary Personnel at the impacted site to select the location of the temporary morgue site if he personally cannot do it.

The temporary morgue should be located as near as possible to areas with heavy death toll and should have: showers, hot and cold water, heat, electricity, drainage, ventilation, restrooms, parking area, communication possibilities, rest areas: be fenced or locked for security of remains and personal property, and should be removed from public view and have sufficient space for body identification procedures. It should also be subject to partitioning for separation of functions such as body handling, x-ray, autopsy, records maintenance, interviewing, etc.

Potential, temporary morgue site use areas are existing mortuaries, cemeteries, National Guard Armories, schools or other options without wooden floors. After morgue sites are established, coordinators should obtain refrigerated trailers as necessary. The trailers can be moved to whatever location is desired by the coroner/medical examiner. If refrigerated trailers are not available, the coroner/medical examiner can arrange for railroad refrigeration cars or vans to aid in the preservation of bodies, or cold storage if operational. The functions carried out at each morgue site will be determined by the circumstances.

2. Once a morgue site has been selected, the coroner/medical examiner or perhaps, the designated Mortuary Personnel will organize its operations and assign personnel to some or all of the following jobs: uniformed guards, information clerks, counselors, interviewers, telephone communicators, admissions clerk, general supervisor, identification personnel, orderlies, personal effects custodian, embalming supervisor, embalmers, secretaries, inventory clerk, distribution clerk, and others.
3. The morgue site may be used for the temporary housing, identification, sanitation, preservation, (as authorized) as well as the distribution point for release of the dead to their next of kin or their agent.
4. Refrigeration units will be utilized as necessary.
5. Deceased human remains received at the morgue will be identified and all helpful information shall be recorded for each remains.
6. Personal effects will be received, photographed, recorded and placed in a secure area.
7. Should embalming be necessary, desired, or directed by the coroner/ medical examiner or approved by a family representative, the coroner/medical examiner may rely on the Mortuary Personnel to organize the operations, equipment, supplies and personnel needed.

D. Return of Loved Ones

1. Once the remains have been positively identified, the next of kin will be contacted. At this point the coroner/medical examiner, or designated, Mortuary Personnel will coordinate the release of the remains and personal effects to the next of kin or their representative.

2. In situations where there are unidentified remains, the coroner/medical examiner shall make the decision and provide direction regarding their disposition.
3. Where embalming or preparation is authorized to be accomplished, the procedure will be under the direction of the Mortuary Personnel for later transportation to the family's designated funeral home, cemetery or other destination.

E. Mass Burial Guidelines

1. Mass burial may become necessary when the number of remains cannot otherwise be managed and become a public health concern or where the remains cannot be adequately refrigerated or embalmed, identified or processed in an acceptable time.
2. Any decision to begin mass burial must be made at the highest levels of state government. Their direction will be essential before such an effort can be initiated for the public health, safety and welfare.
3. The location of any mass burial site must also be agreed upon by the above agencies, taking into consideration the number of remains to be buried, distance and transportation considerations. An existing cemetery would be the ideal and most logical location for any mass burial.

The next consideration should be given to federal, state, county or city-owned property or right-of-ways, such as: parks and recreational areas, flood control basins, sides of freeways and river beds, beneath high power lines or rail-yards or along rail lines.

Alternate consideration can be given to private property, preferably large, open fields or similar sites. Access and egress are also important factors along with the type of terrain and the understanding that later exhumations will occur. These exhumations will be ordered in an attempt to identify and return remains to families.

4. Process for Mass Burial by Mortuary Personnel – Those remains designated for mass burial should be processed to ensure the following:
 - Body rechecked for any type of jewelry or other items that may lead to identity.
 - Postmortem information has been properly documented, especially in those areas of scars, tattoos, deformities and other physical descriptions.
 - Fingerprints have been taken, if not, rechecked for possible prints to be taken.

- Mandible and maxillary removed and placed into a properly marked container.
- An additional body tag (preferably metal), has been attached, properly filled out, and placed into a small, sealed bag.
- Body wrapped in plastic sheeting or disaster pouch and tied/zipped to deter leakage.
- A second additional tag attached to the pouch containing the body number.
- If possible, body placed in a wooden or metal container for burial: that container should also be marked with corresponding identification numbers.
- Exact location of each body buried must be recorded on grid maps including dates, times, and other information necessary for orderly exhumations at a later time.
- Each burial site also may be marked (staked) with the correct corresponding Doe numbers.

F. Guidelines

If possible, all burials should be under the direction and control of the coroner/medical examiner. However, in cases where widespread devastation has occurred, bury the dead only as a last resort.

In the case of thousands of dead, if anyone is directed to bury a dead human body, then the following records shall be made and a report of this activity given to the coroner/medical examiner. If the proper forms are not available, a blank piece of paper could be used to list the information below:

1. Morgue number, sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, eye color, scars, tattoos, teeth (natural, false, or both), missing or artificial limbs.
2. Date of death and/or date of recovery.
3. List all details about clothing: size, color, manufacturer, etc.
4. List all items found in pockets.
5. Ink fingers and take fingerprints and photograph of remains.

6. Site of recovery, county of death, place and date of burial.
7. Print your name, address, phone number, and Social Security number on the form and sign it.
8. Attach a tag or a piece of tape on the body and write Social Security number on it.
9. Bury the dead body only as a last resort. If you need to bury the body, follow these guidelines: dig grave minimum 36" deep; make sure your Social Security number is on the body; record exact location of grave on identification form you have made (so grave can be found later); wrap body in plastic, tarpaulin, or heavy blankets; mark grave with a homemade cross and write on cross "DEAD HUMAN BODY" and write your Social Security number on cross. (Your Social Security number is being requested so you can be contacted later if necessary).
10. Turn in the information you have recorded to the coroner/medical examiner or emergency operation official.

G. Unidentified Remains and/or Tissue

Disposition of unidentified remains and/or tissue is the responsibility of the coroner/medical examiner. State or local laws may predetermine the disposition of the remains/tissue. Remains and/or tissue release for disposition should follow these prescribed guidelines:

1. Under no circumstances should unidentified or unassociated remains or tissue be commingled with identified remains.
2. Remains should be prepared by applicable standard preparation procedures.
3. Interment in a local cemetery should be choice of preference. Cremation should be avoided for religious reasons and possible identification at a later date.
4. Religious considerations should be observed. Non-denominational rites should be held at the site of interment.
5. Interment should take place in the locality of the disaster.
6. Records and procedures for interment should follow the procedures as set forth in the mass burial section.

H. Storage vs. Temporary Burial

Storage of remains or tissue may be the choice rather than temporary burial. Consideration in the decision would include: time between death and the identification or return of the remains to the family; inability to locate or determine the next of kin; and legal considerations. Determination will be the responsibility of the coroner/medical examiner. Remains will be released to the mortuary personnel for preparation and storage. Preparation should be done by standard preparation procedures, pouched and/or casketed, then returned to the coroner/medical examiner for storage. Records and procedures for storage should follow the procedures as set forth in the mass burial section.

I. Remains Not Recovered

Conditions and circumstances sometimes preclude the recovery of remains in spite of exhaustive efforts and resources expended by those involved. Once the determination has been made that one or more remains are unrecoverable, nondenominational memorial services should be arranged. All efforts should be made to notify and include the surviving family members in this service. Assistance in post-death activities should be extended to the surviving family members.

Organization and Responsibility

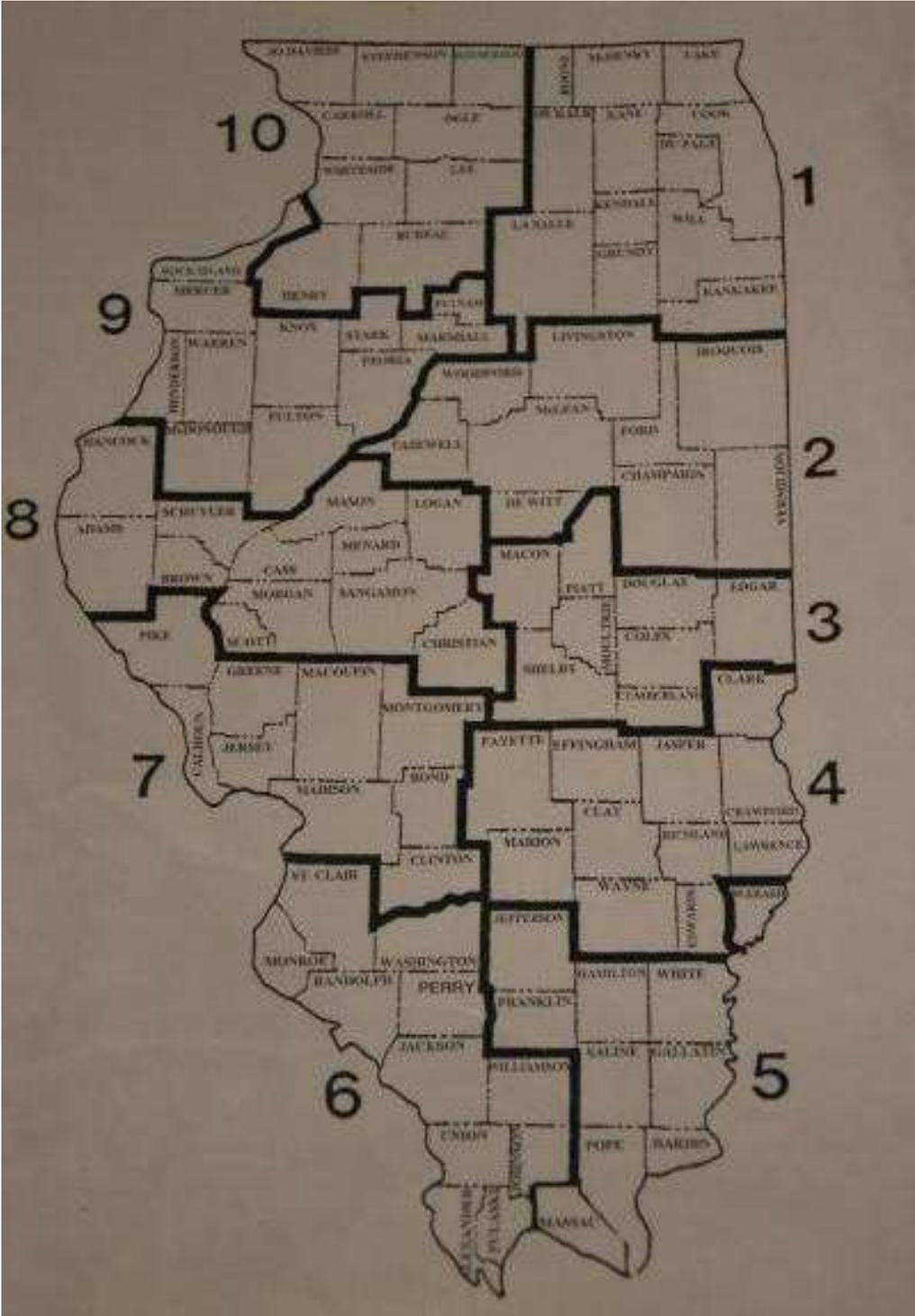
Sangamon County OEM shall work with the Sangamon County Coroner to review and maintain this annex.

Appendices

1. Map of ICME Districts
2. Contact Information

APPENDIX 1

MAP OF ICME DISTRICTS



APPENDIX 2

CONTACT INFORMATION

Sangamon County Coroner

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| 217-756-6610 | Office |
| 217-753-6666 | 24-hour thru Dispatch Center |

State-wide Assistance

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| 217-525-2000 | IFDA Office |
| 309-558-3640 | ICMEA Office |
| 217-782-7860 | 24-hour thru IEMA |