UNIT 7. FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR MASS FATALITIES INCIDENTS
Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to identify the resources that are available at the Federal level during a mass fatalities incident.

Scope

The scope of this unit will include:

- Introduction and Unit Overview.
- Types of Federal Assistance.
- Federal Assistance Following Terrorist Incidents.
- Requesting Federal Assistance.
- Unit Summary.

Time Plan

The suggested time plan for this unit is shown below.

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<td>Introduction and Unit Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Types of Federal Assistance</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Assistance Following Terrorist Incidents</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requesting Federal Assistance</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit Summary</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 hour</strong></td>
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INTRODUCTION AND UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will include:

- Types of Federal Assistance.
- Federal Assistance Following Terrorist Incidents.
- Requesting Federal Assistance.

There are several types of Federal assistance that may be available during a mass fatalities incident.
Unit Objective

Identify the resources that are available at the Federal level during a mass fatalities incident.

Notes:

At the end of this unit, you should be able to identify the resources that are available at the Federal level during a mass fatalities incident.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Notes:

The Federal Government provides an array of resources for mass fatalities incidents. The type of incident determines, to some extent, which department coordinates the lead elements of the response. For example, the NTSB has the lead for aviation, bus, rail, and cruise ship accidents.

The Federal resources that will be covered include the:

- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

- National Disaster Medical System (NDMS): Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs) (10 teams, including one DMORT WMD team)
  - DMORT Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (three units)
  - Family Assistance Center
  - DMORT WMD Team (1 team)
  - Department of Health and Human Services.
  - FBI Office of Victims’ Assistance.

Note the following points:

- DMORTs are assigned to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

- The Department of Defense (DOD) mortuary affairs unit has been named to support HHS activities.

These and other Federal agencies that can be called upon to assist in mass fatalities incidents will be discussed in this unit.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

Notes:

The role of the NTSB can generally be described as that of a coordinator. The Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996 tasked the NTSB Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance to coordinate Federal government resources to support the efforts of the local and State government and the airline in meeting the needs of aviation disaster victims and their families. This NTSB role has been applied to other modes of transportation.

NTSB responds to accidents involving several modes of transportation: Aviation, rail, marine, and certain highway, pipeline, and hazmat events. With the passage of the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act, the NTSB developed its Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters. Originally released in 2000, the Plan was revised and released again in 2008.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

Notes:

Although the Family Assistance Plan applies only to aviation disasters, the tasks in the plan and the participation of the Federal partners are available for other types of transportation accidents. The agencies’ roles in these incidents would be similar to those carried out in an air disaster, although they are not required by law.

This plan is the basic document for organizations that have been given responsibilities under it so that they can:

- Develop supporting plans.
- Establish procedures.

In the event of an aviation disaster, NTSB will initiate the notification of Federal agencies to activate planning and coordinating with the airline an appropriate response, based on the magnitude of the crash.

As information about the incident becomes more concise, additional resources may be called upon to support the incident.
Notes:

Upon direction of the Director of NTSB, the communications center will notify any or all of the following operations centers:

- Although not a Federal resource, the American Red Cross Operations Center can assist in notifying family members who are members of the U.S. military. The Red Cross also will help establish shelters and feeding facilities for disaster workers, and make emergency supplies available to family members of victims. Several Federal agencies use the American Red Cross to manage their FACs.

- The Department of State Operations Center can expedite visa processing for family members who are non-U.S. nationals and (as in the case of Egypt Air 990 crash) works with foreign governments in the diplomatic arena.

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): Secretary's Operations Center (SOC) can reach out to subject-matter experts across its Operative Divisions to provide many services, including epidemiological investigations of infectious disease outbreaks, guidance on the recommended level of personal protective equipment (PPE) for infectious diseases, information on properly filling out death certifications, etc. The SOC has representatives from other Federal departments (e.g., DOD, DVA, and the American Red Cross, as well as HHS components so it can reach out broadly to answer health-related questions).
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Operations Center will investigate any mass fatalities incident that NTSB has reason to believe has been caused by the commission of a crime.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

Visual 7.6

**Family Assistance Plan Resources**

- Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Department of Defense (DOD)
- Non-FBI Department of Justice (DOJ) agencies

Notes:

Note the resources that NTSB may notify:

- The Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can coordinate 28 Federal agencies, as needed, for the response. In mass fatalities disasters declared under the Stafford Act, FEMA can provide disaster housing assistance, emergency assistance to families, grief counseling, and a range of other services.

- The Department of Defense can provide specialized decontamination and other specialized assistance during mass fatalities incidents.

- Non-FBI Department of Justice agencies, such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (BATTE) can provide specialized expertise in incidents involving bombs.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

Victim Support Tasks

Visual 7.7

In its plan, the NTSB identifies, and describes in greater detail, seven overall Victim Support Tasks (VSTs). VSTs are tasks that participating agencies may be required to perform based on the size and circumstances of the incident.

Note the list of the VSTs:

- **NTSB Tasks**: To coordinate the resources of the Federal, State, and local agencies
- **Airline Tasks**: To provide certain types of information to the NTSB, provide a toll-free number for information, notify family members about the accident, secure facility for family members (at an airport and a family assistance center/hotel)
- **Family Care and Mental Health (American Red Cross)**: Coordinate agencies that will provide counseling and other support services; provide child care at the family assistance center, arrange for interfaith memorial service
- **Victim Identification and Forensic Services (Department of Health and Human Services (HHS))**: Provide a DMORT team, and associated Morgue and Family Assistance Teams, to support the local Medical Examiner or Coroner in conducting victim identification.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

Victim Support Tasks

Notes:

- **Assisting Families of Foreign Victims** (Department of State): Assist in contacting families of foreign victims; assist in obtaining medical/dental records of foreign victims; provide translation services.

- **Communication** (DHS/FEMA): If the accident occurs in a remote area, assist in creating a communication system that will allow NTSB and its partners with communications equipment.

- **Assisting Victims of Crime** (Department of Justice/FBI): Provide FBI resources to assist with victim identification; transfer management of family assistance responsibilities to the FBI Office for Victim Assistance.

Each aviation crash is unique, and all of the responsibilities under each VST may or may not be employed.

NTSB’s plan specifies for the establishment of a Joint Family Support Operations Center (JFSOC) to participate in the local, airline, and Federal response.
Notes:

The National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) is a section within the HHS.

NDMS has the responsibility for managing and coordinating the Federal medical response to major emergencies and Federally declared disasters including:

- Natural disasters.
- Technological disasters.
- Major transportation accidents.
- Acts of terrorism, including events involving weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)

Notes:

NDMS assists in the Federal medical response to major emergencies and Federally declared disasters.

Note the following components of NDMS.

- Medical response to a disaster area in the form of teams, supplies, and equipment
- Patient movement from a disaster site to unaffected areas of the Nation
- Definitive medical care at participating hospitals in unaffected areas

As part of its responsibilities in declared disasters and major emergencies, NDMS is assigned to provide victim identification and mortuary services.
The responsibilities for victim identification and mortuary services include:

- Temporary morgue resources.
- Victim identification.
- Forensic dental pathology.
- Forensic anthropology methods.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)

Visual 7.12

Identification and Mortuary Services

- Processing
- Preparation
- Disposition of remains

Notes:

- Processing
- Preparation
- Disposition of remains

To accomplish this mission, Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams were developed. The next section will cover these teams.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

**Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs)**

**Notes:**

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs) are composed 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 disciplines. When members are activated, licensure and certification are recognized by all States, and the team members are compensated for their duty time by the Federal government as temporary Federal employees.

During a response, DMORTs work under the guidance of local authorities by providing technical assistance and personnel to recover, identify, and process deceased victims.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs)

Notes:

DMORTs are directed by the NDMS and that the teams are composed of:

- Funeral directors.
- Coroners/Medical examiners.
- Pathologists.
- Forensic anthropologists.
- Medical records technicians and transcribers.
Types of Federal Assistance

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs)

Notes:

Note the types of professionals that comprise the DMORT.

- Fingerprint specialists
- Forensic odontologists
- Dental assistants
- X-ray technicians
- Mental health specialists
- Investigative personnel

DMORT teams also include computer professionals along with administrative and support staff.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs)

Notes:

There are currently three core groups in the DMORT system. These groups include:

- **The Family Assistance** team, which is responsible for working directly with families involved in a mass fatalities incident.

- **The Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)** team, which is responsible to decontaminate remains from a chemical, biological, or nuclear event. One DMORT team is dedicated to WMD incidents.

The next section will cover the Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU).
### TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

**Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU)**

**Notes:**

Disaster Portable Morgue Units are caches of highly specialized equipment and supplies that are prestaged for deployment to a disaster site.

DPMUs contain a complete morgue with designated workstations for each processing element. The DPMU team travels with this equipment to assist in the setup, operation, packing, restocking, and warehousing of all DPMU equipment.

There are currently two DPMUs—one that is stationed in Maryland and another that is stationed in California. The DPMUs can be deployed to the incident site by rail, truck, plane, or military transportation.
TYPES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU)

Notes:

The DPMU contains more than 10,000 individual items, including:

- **Pathology equipment**, including forceps, scalpels, hemostats, etc.
- **Anthropology equipment**, including measuring devices, instruments, etc.
- **Radiology equipment**, including a dental x-ray, 2 full-body x-ray machines, developers, etc.
- **Photography/Personal effects equipment**, including a camera, film, ladder, etc.
- Wheeled exam tables.
- Support equipment, including:
  - Partitions and supports.
  - Electrical distribution equipment.
  - Plumbing/hot water heaters.
  - Personal protective gear, etc.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Notes:

Following incidents of terrorism or other incidents that result in the implementation of the National Response Framework (NRF), additional Federal resources will be brought to bear.

The following assets can be brought to bear after an incident resulting in implementation of the NRF:

- Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Teams
- The American Red Cross
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
  - Emergency Preparedness Response Branch (EPRB)
  - Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response (OTPER)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Energy (DOE)

Each of these will be covered under this topic.
Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) involves the location, rescue (extrication), and initial medical stabilization of victims trapped in confined spaces. Structural collapse is most often the cause of victims being trapped, but victims also may be trapped in transportation accidents, mines, and collapsed trenches.

Urban search and rescue is considered a multihazard discipline, as it may be needed in the response to natural, technological, and hazardous materials events, as well as terrorist incidents.

There are many participants in the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System, including:

- **FEMA**: Establishes policy and leads the coordination of the National system.
- **Task Forces**: There are 28 FEMA US&R Task Forces nationwide, trained and equipped by FEMA.
- **Incident Support Teams**: These teams support the Task Forces through logistics, electronic, and coordination expertise.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Urban Search & Rescue (US&R)

US&R Task Forces are partnerships between:

- Local fire and rescue departments.
- Law enforcement agencies.
- Private organizations.

Each Task Force, composed of 62 positions, is totally self sufficient for the first 72 hours of a deployment. Training requirements are intensive, and include Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training, and specialty training such as K-9 search, rescue, and rigging.
Notes:

US&R Task Forces are able to:

- Conduct physical search and rescue activities in collapsed structures.
- Provide emergency medical care to trapped victims.
- Employ search and rescue dogs.
- Assess and control utility (e.g., natural gas and electric) and hazardous materials (HazMat) issues.
- Evacuate and stabilize damaged structures.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

The American Red Cross

Mass Care

- Shelter
- Feeding
- Emergency first aid
- Disaster welfare information
- Bulk distribution of emergency relief items

Notes:

Under the Family Assistance Plan, Victim Support Task 3, Family Care and Mental Health, is the responsibility of the American Red Cross.

Similarly, in cases that result in the implementation of the National Response Plan, the American Red Cross coordinates Federal response assistance to the mass care response of State and local governments, along with the efforts of other voluntary agencies.

Mass care encompasses the following:

- **Shelter**: The provision of emergency shelter for disaster victims.

- **Feeding**: The provision of food and drink for disaster victims and emergency workers through a combination of fixed sites, mobile feeding units, and bulk food distribution.

- **Emergency first aid**: The provision of emergency first aid services to disaster victims and workers at mass care facilities and at designated sites within the disaster area.

- **Disaster welfare information**: Regarding individuals residing within the affected area, as well as to aid in reunification of family members within the affected area who were separated at the time of the disaster.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

The American Red Cross

- **Bulk distribution of emergency relief items:** Determined by the requirement to meet urgent needs of disaster victims for the essential items.

While FEMA is the primary designated agency for mass care, its efforts will be assisted by designated support agencies that are assigned specific roles and tasks. Each support agency will provide representatives who are available on a 24-hour basis.

**Are there any questions about the general role of the American Red Cross?**

The next section will discuss the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Notes:

Under the National Response Framework, HHS leads and coordinates Emergency Support Function #8, Public Health and Medical Services Annex. ESF #8 provides the mechanism for coordinated Federal assistance to supplement State, local, and tribal resources in response to public health and medical-care needs for potential or actual Incidents of National Significance and/or during a developing potential health and medical situation. One of its functional areas is Victim Identification/Mortuary Services. It works closely with NDMS (DMORT) to provide fatality management experts and equipment.

The Secretary of HHS, through the Assistant Secretary for Public Health Emergency Preparedness (ASPHEP) coordinates national ESF #8 preparedness response and recovery actions. The HHS Secretary’s Operations Center (SOC) facilitates the coordination of the overall national ESF #8 response by working closely with support agencies, such as HHS Operation Divisions, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Major operational components involved in response have their own operations center and some are also represented in the SOC. In coordination with these departments and Operational Divisions (OPDIVs), a determination is made on which of them can meet the State’s request and is then tasked to do so.

Process for Requesting Federal Support for ESF #8

All requests for Federal assistance must be initiated by the State using an Action Request Form (ARF). The ARF is then sent to the FEMA Operations Section Chief who analyzes the request for:

- **Who?** Has the request come from the appropriate authorized State representative? Has the State Ops Check seen it?

- **What is needed?** The request should identify the need rather than the solution.

- **When?** When is it needed? Is it an immediate or life-threatening need?

- **Where?** Where is the resource needed?

- **How Long?** The request should include an estimate of how long the assistance needs to be provided?

To expedite the ARF process, local authorities should address the questions above with as much specificity as possible so the State can compile it into an ARF. Descriptions and numbers of the various specialists, equipment, services, and information assist the State in putting together requests and make it more likely that Federal assets will provide you what you need.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Help In Writing the Information Needed for an ARF

Following activation of ESF #8, HHS rapidly deploys one or more Emergency Coordinators (ECs) to the State Emergency Operations Center (or comparable structure). One of the SERT’s roles is to assist local and State officials in identifying needs and writing them in a format that can be acted upon quickly. For example, during Hurricane Katrina, a US Public Health Service dentist worked closely with DMORT and the Fatality Management Branch Director to make sure the necessary information was included and to serve as a conduit for resolving questions.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Visual 7.21

EPRB Response

- **Within 10 minutes**: Regional Emergency Response Coordinator contacts the person initiating the request.
- **Within 20 minutes**: Preliminary assessment team is available by phone for consultation.
- **Within 8 hours**: Emergency response coordinator and other team members can be onsite.

Notes:

Within the CDC, the Emergency Preparedness Response Branch (EPRB) is the responding organization. The EPRB is committed to respond as follows:

- **Within 10 minutes**: A Regional Emergency Response Coordinator contacts the person initiating the request. The coordinator will obtain full details of the emergency situation and contact the CDC staff who can best respond.

- **Within 20 minutes**: A preliminary assessment team is available by phone for consultation. Depending on the situation, the team members may include:
  - Toxicologists.
  - Chemists.
  - Physicians.
  - Environmental health scientists.
  - Health physicists.

- **Within 8 hours**: An emergency response coordinator and other team members can be on-scene if an immediate on-scene response is required.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Notes:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will activate environmental response capabilities to support the Federal response to acts of Nuclear/Biological/Chemical/Weapons of Mass Destruction (NBC/WMD) terrorism.

The EPA serves as a support agency to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for technical operations and as a support agency to FEMA for consequence management. EPA provides technical personnel and supporting equipment to the lead Federal agency during all aspects of a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) terrorist incident.

The ways in which the EPA assists include:

- Agent identification, detection, and reduction.
- Environmental monitoring.
- Sample and forensic evidence collection/analysis.
- Feasibility assessment and cleanup.
- Onsite safety, protection, prevention, decontamination, and restoration.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Under the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) the EPA provides the predesignated Federal On-Scene Coordinator for oil discharges, pollutants, and contaminants to navigable waters into the environment in inland areas.
The National Guard Civil Support Team (CRT) supports civil authorities at domestic CBRNE incident site:

- In identifying and assessing hazards.
- By providing advice to civil authorities.
- By facilitating the arrival of follow-on military forces.

CSTs support States in incidents involving:

- WMDs.
- Intentional or unintentional release of CBRNE and adversarial or human-caused disasters that do, or could result in catastrophic loss of life or property.

CSTs complement and enhance State CBRNE response capabilities.

Within 3 hours of notification, each WMD CST deploys to the incident site. CSTs deploy with a command vehicle, an operations trailer, a communications platform, an Analytical Laboratory System vehicle, which contains a full suite of analysis equipment to support the characterization of specific hazards), and several general-purpose vehicles.
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

The U.S. Marine Corps Chemical Biological Incident Response Team (CBIRF) provides capabilities to:
- Detect and identify agents.
- Perform casualty search, rescue, and personnel decontamination.
- Provide emergency medical care and stabilization of contaminated personnel.

Notes:

The U.S. Marine Corps maintains a force that, when requested, can forward deploy and/or respond to a credible threat of a CBRNE incident in order to assist local, State, or Federal agencies and unified combat commanders to conduct consequence management operations.

CBIRF provides capabilities to:

- Detect and identify agents.
- Perform casualty search, rescue, and personnel decontamination.
- Provide emergency medical care and stabilization of contaminated personnel.
Federal Assistance Following Terrorist Incidents

Department of Energy (DOE)

Notes:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will activate nuclear response capabilities to support the Federal response to threats or acts of nuclear/WMD terrorism.

DOE’s Emergency Assistance Program includes all activities whereby departmental resources, emergency response assets, personnel, and/or facilities are deployed in support of Federal interagency plans, international agreements, Presidential direction, and State, local, or tribal agreements of mutual aid.

The Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan (FRERP) has been developed jointly by Federal agencies to guide Federal response to a peacetime radiological emergency. The DOE may coordinate with individual agencies that are identified in the FRERP to use the structures, relationships, and capabilities described in the FRERP to support response operations.

The FRERP response may include:

- Onsite management.
- Radiological monitoring and assessment of ground and airborne contaminants.
- Development of Federal protective action recommendations.
- Provision of information on the radiological response to the public.
Department of Energy (DOE)

Deployable DOE scientific technical assistance and support includes capabilities, such as:

- Search operations.
- Access operations.
- Render-safe operations.
- Containment, relocation, and storage of special nuclear material evidence.
- Postincident cleanup.

Additionally, the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NRP) provides the organizational structure and procedures for Federal responses to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances.
REQUESTING FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Department of Energy (DOE) Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

Notes:

In the event of a mass fatalities incident, sufficient resources may not be available to State and local agencies to meet emergency requirements. Federal assistance may be required to identify and deploy resources from outside the affected area to ensure a timely, efficient, and effective response.

Federal resources may be required either in the case of a Federal disaster declaration or in the absence of a declaration.
Notes:

There are several types of Federal assistance that may be available following mass fatalities incidents.

Note the additional resources that may be brought to bear following incidents of terrorism or other mass fatalities incidents.

- Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Teams
- The American Red Cross
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- The Department of Energy (DOE), including the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
- National Guard Civil Support Teams (CSTs)
- U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF)

Next will be the final exercise it will provide an opportunity for you to apply what you have learned throughout the course.