



G-386 Mass Fatality Incident Response

Student Manual

February 2012



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UNIT 1. INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OVERVIEW

Acknowledgements

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Unit 1. Introduction and Course Overview

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Describe issues, concerns, and considerations surrounding mass fatalities incidents.
Relate the course objectives to your concerns and expectations.

Scope

The scope of this unit will include:

- Welcome and Instructor Introductions.
 - Student Introductions.
 - Course Overview.
 - The Mass Fatalities Incident.
 - Unit Summary.
-

Time Plan

The suggested time plan for this unit is shown below.

| Topic | Time |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Welcome and Instructor Introductions | 5 minutes |
| Student Introductions | 20 minutes |
| Course Overview | 25 minutes |
| The Mass Fatalities Incident | 50 minutes |
| Unit Summary | 5 minutes |
| Total Time | 1 hours 45 minutes |

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WELCOME AND INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTIONS

Visual 1.1



Notes:

Welcome to the course.

STUDENT INTRODUCTIONS

Notes:

Introduce yourself by providing:

- Your name.
- Your organization.
- A brief statement of your experience with mass fatalities incident response, if any.
- A brief statement of your expectations—what you hope to gain from the course.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Visual 1.2

Course Objectives

- Describe the characteristics of a mass fatalities incident.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of key players in a mass fatalities incident.
- Describe the steps required to respond to a mass fatalities incident, including catastrophic numbers of fatalities and contaminated remains.



Visual 1.2
Mass Fatality Incident Response



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Notes:

The course will provide an introduction to mass fatalities incidents. The course will cover the main tasks that need to be done to plan for, operate at the scene of, and recover from mass fatalities incidents.

The course will allow time to address your issues, concerns, and considerations.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Describe the characteristics of a mass fatalities incident.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of key players in a mass fatalities incident.
- Describe the steps required to respond to a mass fatalities incident, including catastrophic numbers of fatalities and contaminated remains.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Visual 1.3

Course Objectives

- Assess your local Mortuary Annex.
- Describe critical operational activities.
- Explain how the Family Assistance Center supports families and aids in identification.
- Identify the requirements to ensure that the psychological needs of morgue personnel are addressed.



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Visual 1.3
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Notes:

- Assess your local Mass Fatalities Annex to determine your jurisdiction's preparedness for a mass fatalities incident.
- Describe the critical operational activities:
 - Notification
 - Staging
 - Search and recovery
 - Morgue operations
 - Media relations
 - Family assistance
- Explain how the Family Assistance Center is used to support families and to aid identification of the deceased.
- Identify the requirements to ensure that the psychological needs of morgue personnel are addressed.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Visual 1.4

Course Objectives

- Recognize the importance of stress management debriefings for responders at a mass fatalities incident.
- Identify the resources that are available at the local, State, and Federal levels.
- Apply the principles of ICS to a simulated incident.



 **FEMA** Visual 1.4
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Notes:

- Recognize the importance of Critical Incident Stress Debriefings for responders at a mass fatalities incident.
- Identify the resources that are available during a mass fatalities incident and describe their roles and responsibilities.
- Apply the principles of ICS to a simulated incident.

Does anyone have any questions about what will be covered in this course?

COURSE OVERVIEW

Visual 1.5

Course Agenda

| Day | AM | PM |
|-----|--|--|
| 1 | Unit 1. Introduction and Course Overview Unit 2. Incident Management | Unit 3. Preincident Planning Unit 4. Managing Mass Fatalities Operations |
| 2 | Unit 4. Managing Mass Fatalities Operations Unit 5. Establishing the Morgue | Unit 6. Family Assistance Support Operations Unit 7. Federal Assistance for Mass Fatalities Incidents |
| 3 | Unit 8. Mass Fatalities Tabletop Exercise | |



The table is set against a decorative banner featuring the FEMA logo on the left, the word "FEMA" in large white letters, and a stylized American flag motif. In the bottom right corner of the banner, the text "Visual 1.5 Mass Fatality Incident Response" is displayed.

Notes:

COURSE OVERVIEW

Unit Objectives

Visual 1.6

Unit Objectives

- Define a mass fatalities incident.
- Describe the characteristics of a mass fatalities incident.
- Discuss anticipated reactions to mass fatalities.
- Explain the need to show respect for the dead.
- Understand the needs of families and friends.



 **FEMA** Visual 1.6
Mass Fatality Incident Response

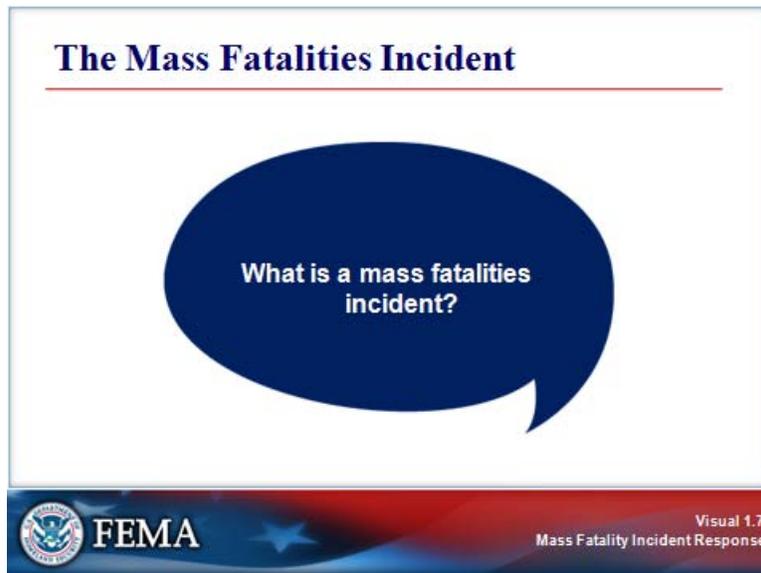
Notes:

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define a mass fatalities incident.
- Describe the characteristics of a mass fatalities incident that drive the response to that incident.
- Discuss anticipated reactions to mass fatalities from responders, survivors, relatives of the deceased, the media, and the general public.
- Explain the need to show respect for the dead—and for the different customs and cultures of the deceased and their families.
- Understand the importance of managing the needs of families and friends of the deceased.

THE MASS FATALITIES INCIDENT

Visual 1.7



Notes:

What is a mass fatalities incident?

THE MASS FATALITIES INCIDENT

Visual 1.8

The Mass Fatalities Incident

- Sights, sounds, and smells
- Characteristics that drive response
- Anticipated reactions
- The need to show respect
- The overriding need to save the living



 **FEMA** Visual 1.8
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Notes:

The following presentation will focus on:

- What you can expect to see, hear, and smell at a mass fatalities incident.
- The characteristics of a mass fatalities incident that drive the response.
- Anticipated reactions to mass fatalities from the:
 - Responders.
 - Survivors.
 - Relatives of the deceased.
 - Media.
 - General public.
- The need to show respect for the dead—and for the different customs and cultures of the deceased and their families:
 - While identification of the dead is a critical issue, the dead must be treated with respect and dignity, both in thought and in action.
 - Activities that might be open to public view must be conducted respectfully at all times.
- The overriding need to save the living:
 - There may be situations in which the need to save a living person overrides the immediate considerations for human remains.
 - The need to manage the needs of the families and friends of the deceased.

THE MASS FATALITIES INCIDENT

Visual 1.9



Notes:

THE MASS FATALITIES INCIDENT

Activity: Analyzing A Mass Fatalities Incident

Visual 1.10

Activity: Analyzing a Mass Fatalities Incident

Follow the steps below to complete this activity:

1. Work in your table groups to complete this activity.
2. Analyze the incident described in the Student Manual.
3. Develop a list of special issues, concerns, and considerations that must be addressed.
4. Be prepared to present your list to the class.

 You will have 20 minutes to complete this activity.

 **FEMA**  Visual 1.10
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Notes:

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to allow you an opportunity to analyze a mass fatalities incident and develop a list of special issues, concerns, and considerations that must be addressed through the response.

Instructions: Follow the steps below to complete this activity:

1. Work in your table groups to complete this activity.
2. Analyze the incident described in the Student Manual.
3. Work with your group to analyze the incident that is presented.
4. Develop a list of the special issues, concerns, and considerations that must be addressed.
5. Be prepared to present your list to the class.
6. You will have 20 minutes to complete this activity.

THE MASS FATALITIES INCIDENT

Activity: Analyzing A Mass Fatalities Incident

Case Study: EF-5 Tornado in Joplin, Missouri, May 22, 2011

In the early evening of May 22, 2011, an EF-5 tornado struck the city of Joplin, Missouri, causing widespread damage and more than 140 fatalities. The tornado was the strongest of many that crushed parts of the Midwest that evening, damaging more than 8,000 homes and destroying St. John's Regional Medical Center. Tornadoes were first reported in Kansas, just across the State line, shortly after 4:00, and by 5:35, there were reports of hail and funnel clouds in Joplin. Within a few minutes more, it was clear that Joplin had suffered a direct hit.

Although the National Weather Service had been tracking tornadoes across the Midwest for most of the afternoon, many in Joplin did not respond to the warnings—or responded too late to save themselves—because tornado warnings were common but few actually struck. This time, the population should have obeyed the warning.

Many survivors were unclear of how long the tornado was on the ground, but when it was over, it became clear that there would be multiple—possibly many—fatalities. The number, however, was unclear. Even the extent of damage was unclear. One Joplin police officer remarked to reporters at the scene, “Tell everyone if they don't have business south of 20th street, stay out!” According to one reporter, the officer's statement meant that “the southern third of the city [was] demolished”.

Rescue efforts were complicated by the extent of damage and the need to search through thousands of piles of debris, some of which were miles from Joplin. Communication was difficult because power lines and all but one cell tower had been severely damaged or destroyed. The remaining cell tower was overwhelmed, and only text messages seemed to get through.

Rescue personnel from several States deployed to Joplin, and hundreds of emergent volunteers began sifting through the rubble. Many of the searches were successful, but a list of more than 200 who were reported missing remained.

Response personnel were deployed from Kansas, as well as Missouri. More than 40 agencies provided personnel at the scene including:

- Camden Sheriff's Office.
- St. Louis Search and Rescue Task Force.
- Osage Beach, Search and Rescue Task Force.
- Missouri Department of Public Safety.
- Missouri State Highway Patrol.
- Missouri National Guard.
- Joplin Police Department.
- Joplin Fire Department.
- Joplin City Health Department.
- Jasper County Health Department.
- Newton County Health Department.

THE MASS FATALITIES INCIDENT

Activity: Analyzing A Mass Fatalities Incident

The Red Cross (Greater Ozarks Chapter) and Salvation Army activated their disaster services functions to provide food, water, and shelter to survivors.

Within a short time, it was clear that the Jasper and Newton County coroners' offices would be overwhelmed. A temporary morgue was established at the football field at Southern Missouri State University. These and other sets of remains were later moved to refrigerated trucks at a temporary morgue, in Atlas, Missouri, which was staffed by a Federal Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT). Mortuary personnel established the goal of identifying 19 sets of remains each day.

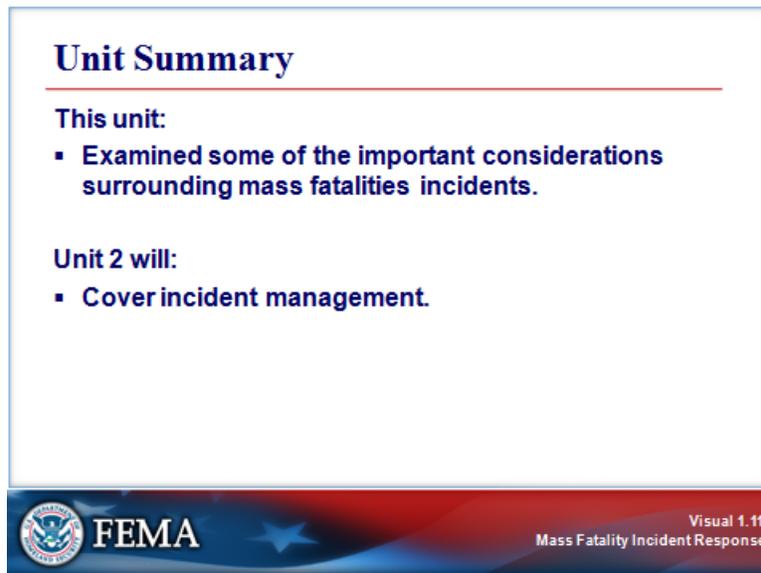
Early in the identification process, a child was released to a funeral home after identification by family members. During preparation of the remains, it became clear that the child had been misidentified. Because of this event, the coroners required confirmation of identity by means other than visual identification, unless the individual had been with the deceased at the time of death and had not been separated. That policy slowed the identification and release of remains, increasing relatives' frustration levels as they waited for release of their loved ones' remains.

Sources:

Information from this case study has been drawn from several sources. Special thanks are due to Cliff Judy, reporter for KMBC-TV 9 in Kansas City, MO.

UNIT SUMMARY

Visual 1.11



Unit Summary

This unit:

- Examined some of the important considerations surrounding mass fatalities incidents.

Unit 2 will:

- Cover incident management.

 **FEMA**  Visual 1.11
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Notes:

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- Examined some of the important considerations surrounding mass fatalities incidents.

Unit 2 will:

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