



Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) and Mass Fatality Management Training



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Introduction:

Disaster victim identification DVI and mass fatality management training is a five-day course for emergency management, health planning, mortuary coordination and humanitarian teams, ending with a Mass Fatality Management and DVI Plan for a case sudden-onset disaster. Organisations that lack such a plan risk hasty burials, misidentification, delayed release of the deceased and lasting distress for bereaved families. Nominees already plan or coordinate emergency, health or humanitarian services and are taught through case studies built around one unfolding disaster scenario. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this course on disaster victim identification and mass fatality management.

Course Objectives:

- Integrate a mass fatality cell and DVI management team into the incident command structure, with clear agency roles and activation triggers
- Plan a temporary mortuary, including site selection, workflow stations, refrigerated storage and supplies
- Organise ante-mortem data collection from families and oversee post-mortem data recording at management level
- Explain primary and secondary identification methods to decision makers and families, and run reconciliation through an identification board
- Set up a family assistance centre, information management arrangements and respectful handling of the deceased that meets cultural and religious requirements
- Prepare a Mass Fatality Management and DVI Plan, with staff welfare arrangements, for a sudden-onset disaster

Target Audience:

- Emergency management teams responsible for mass casualty and mass fatality planning
 - Health authority planning units accountable for surge capacity, mortuary capacity and death certification
 - Forensic and mortuary coordination teams responsible for identification workflows and storage of the deceased
 - Humanitarian and relief organisation teams responsible for family support and tracing of missing persons
 - Civil defence and municipal services teams responsible for recovery support, burial sites and logistics
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Course Outline:

Day 1: Mass Fatality Incidents, DVI Context and Readiness

- Mass Fatality Incident Definitions, Typology and Capacity Thresholds
- Open and Closed Population Incidents and Identification Implications
- Humanitarian Principles for Management of the Dead
- Agency Roles Across Health, Forensic, Civil Defence and Humanitarian Bodies
- Mass Fatality Readiness Self-Assessment Against Existing Emergency Plans

Day 2: DVI Frameworks, Command Integration and Information Management

- International DVI Guidance Four-Phase Model Overview
- Mass Fatality Cell Integration and DVI Management Team Roles
- Mass Fatality Plan Structure, Triggers and Activation Levels
- Information Management, Missing Persons Lists and Data Protection
- Mutual Aid and International DVI Team Request Procedures

Day 3: Recovery, Temporary Mortuary and Ante-Mortem Data

- Recovery of Remains Principles and Body Numbering Systems
- Temporary Mortuary Site Selection, Layout and Workflow Stations
- Refrigerated Storage, Supplies and Mortuary Logistics Planning
- Ante-Mortem Data Collection Interviews With Bereaved Families
- Post-Mortem Data Recording Forms at Overview Level

Day 4: Identification, Reconciliation, Families and Dignity

- Primary Identifiers DNA, Fingerprints and Dental Records Explained
- Secondary Identification Methods Using Medical Findings and Personal Effects
- Reconciliation Process and Identification Board Decision Records
- Family Assistance Centre Design and Family Liaison Communication
- Cultural and Religious Requirements for Handling and Releasing the Deceased

Day 5: Case Study and the Mass Fatality Management and DVI Plan

- Case Disaster Briefing and Mass Fatality Activation Decision
 - Case Temporary Mortuary and Family Assistance Centre Layout
 - Case Ante-Mortem Collection and Reconciliation Workflow Design
 - Case Staff Welfare, Rotation and Psychological Support Arrangements
 - Mass Fatality Management and DVI Plan Completion
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Skills You Will Gain:

- Mass Fatality Planning
- DVI Command Integration
- Temporary Mortuary Design
- Ante-Mortem Data Management
- Identification Method Literacy
- Reconciliation Oversight
- Family Assistance Coordination
- Responder Welfare Planning

Why Attend This Course:

- Deliver a Mass Fatality Management and DVI Plan to the emergency management committee or health authority leadership that approves disaster readiness
- Decide when to activate mass fatality arrangements, where to site a temporary mortuary and when an identification is ready for release
- Avoid hasty burials, misidentification and conflicting messages to families that damage public trust after a disaster
- Share ante-mortem interview guides, family communication templates and mortuary layouts with colleagues in partner agencies

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant gives the emergency management committee or health authority leadership a Mass Fatality Management and DVI Plan ready for approval. Leaders use it to decide activation levels, temporary mortuary capacity, agency roles and family assistance arrangements before a disaster, while forensic, health and humanitarian partners use it to align their own procedures. After its first use in an exercise or a real incident, the unit should review identification turnaround, the quality of family communication, storage capacity and the welfare of responding staff, then update the plan.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before a disaster victim identification and mass fatality management course?

Participants should already plan or coordinate emergency, health, forensic or humanitarian services. No laboratory or medical background is needed: identification methods are explained in non-technical terms and the material avoids graphic content. Bringing their organisation's current emergency plan helps them apply the case work.

How does disaster victim identification and mass fatality management differ from crime scene management or humanitarian logistics courses?

It focuses on planning and coordinating the response to large numbers of deaths: command integration, temporary mortuaries, identification, families and dignity. Crime scene courses teach evidence recovery for investigations, and humanitarian logistics courses cover relief supplies for survivors.

Why are DNA, fingerprints and dental records the primary identifiers in disaster victim identification?

They can be compared objectively against ante-mortem records and give reliable results. Secondary methods, such as medical findings, personal effects and physical descriptions, support identification but are rarely enough alone, because appearance and belongings can mislead after a disaster.

What do participants take back from disaster victim identification and mass fatality management training?

Participants take back a Mass Fatality Management and DVI Plan for a case sudden-onset disaster, with a temporary mortuary layout, ante-mortem interview guide, family assistance centre arrangements and a staff welfare plan they can adapt to their own organisation.
