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LESSON LEARNED

Family Resource Centers: Support Services to Victims from Multiple Jurisdictions

SUMMARY

A mass casualty incident (MCI) may affect residents from multiple states or other jurisdictions. After such incidents, government officials should ensure that support services from all appropriate agencies and jurisdictions are accessible to victims and their families.

DESCRIPTION

The fire that destroyed the Station Club in West Warwick, Rhode Island on February 20, 2003, resulted in 100 deaths and over 200 injuries. After recovery operations ended, personnel from the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services established a Family Resource Center (FRC) in West Warwick. The FRC provided a single location where victims and their families could access municipal, state, and federal government assistance programs. Because 40 percent of the fire's fatalities were from out of state, visitors to the FRC included victims and families from Connecticut and Massachusetts, as well as Rhode Island.

Some assistance programs available at the FRC were state-administered programs, such as disability insurance, food stamps, and Medicaid. Several Rhode Island state agencies worked at the FRC to ensure that victims and their families had a comprehensive understanding of their assistance programs. To assist out-of-state visitors, RIEMA officials invited Connecticut and Massachusetts state agencies to staff the FRC. The invited state agencies, however, provided only minimal representation to the FRC. Although no victim or family member suffered because of their absence, *The Rhode Island Station Club Fire After-Action Report* states that greater involvement from Connecticut and Massachusetts would likely have been beneficial.

When a MCI affects residents from multiple districts or states, government officials should ensure that support services from all appropriate agencies and jurisdictions are accessible to victims and their families.

CITATION(S)

Titan Systems Corporation. *Rhode Island: The Station Club Fire After-Action Report: State, Local, and Federal Government and the Private Sector*. 13 July 2004. ([LLIS.gov](http://www.LLIS.gov) ID# 10806)

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