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# LESSON LEARNED

## Mass Casualty Incidents: Securing Electronic Transmissions of Victim Information

### SUMMARY

Jurisdictions should establish procedures to safeguard all forms of electronically transmitted victim information. This information should not be carelessly displayed or accessible to unauthorized individuals during tabulation and transmittal.

### DESCRIPTION

The fire that destroyed the Station Club in Warwick, Rhode Island on February 20, 2003, resulted in 100 deaths and more than 200 injuries. Immediately following the incident, personnel from the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and American Red Cross established a Family Assistance Center (FAC) at the nearby Crowne Plaza Hotel. The FAC's responsibilities included gathering and disseminating information about victims' whereabouts and statuses.

RIEMA headquarters officials faxed victim information (e.g., hospital records, automobile registration records, and missing person reports) to the FAC. Since the FAC lacked a fax machine, the Crowne Plaza Hotel's front desk received these faxes. Front desk employees notified the FAC upon receiving a fax, then waited for FAC personnel to retrieve it. This procedure allowed hotel employees full access to sensitive victim information.

*The Rhode Island Station Club Fire After-Action Report* recommends that if victim records are transmitted electronically, procedures must be instituted to safeguard such information. It should not be carelessly displayed or accessible to unauthorized individuals during tabulation and transmittal.

### CITATION

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

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