

RELATED TERMS

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Mass Casualty Incidents: Hardcopy Master List of Missing Persons

SUMMARY

Following a mass casualty incident, Incident Commanders (IC) and mortuary service personnel will face the challenge of tracking information on a large number of missing persons. In addition to electronic databases, mortuary service personnel should maintain a hardcopy, backup master list of all missing individuals.

DESCRIPTION

At 9:02 am on April 19, 1995, a massive terrorist bomb ripped through the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, collapsing major portions of the structure. The Disaster Mortuary Team (D-MORT) was immediately faced with the challenge of tracking information on hundreds of missing persons who had either been working in or visiting the building that morning. A missing persons computer database was created to help record the tracking process. However, the D-MORT was worried that inadvertent deletions, incorrect inputs, or power disruptions might cause tracking errors or loss of information.

The D-MORT decided to create and regularly update a hardcopy master list of missing persons as a backup to the computer database. Each missing person was identified by a number on the hardcopy master list. Information on additional missing persons not recorded on the original master list was handwritten at the bottom and numbered accordingly. The hardcopy master list was continuously updated once missing persons were located (i.e., at the hospital, home, etc.) and as bodies were recovered from the collapse site and positively identified. By maintaining a hardcopy master list of missing persons, the D-MORT both ensured that there was a backup for the computer database and that there was a written record of the tracking process.

Following a mass casualty building collapse, incident command and mortuary service personnel should consider developing and regularly updating a hardcopy master list of missing persons in addition to any computer databases.

CITATION

- The City of Oklahoma City. *Final Report: Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building Bombing, April 19, 1995*. July 1996. ([LLIS.gov ID# 9849](#))

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