



**Effingham County
Emergency Management Agency**

**County-Wide Multi-Jurisdictional
Mass Fatality Mortuary Plan**

2013 - 2017

**EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA
Local Emergency Operations Plan – Annex**

**Effingham County, Georgia
Mass Fatality Mortuary Plan
Emergency Management Agency**

The Effingham County Emergency Management Agency has developed a Multi-Jurisdictional Mass Fatality Mortuary Plan, in partnership with County-City Stakeholders.

This Mass Fatality Mortuary Plan was developed in compliance with all state and federal requirements and has been approved as attested by the signatures below, and is being submitted to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for review.

As authorized support groups, local City and County Government officials in Effingham County, Georgia, we the undersigned, understand and support the County-Wide Multi-Jurisdictional Mass Fatality Mortuary Plan.

ATTEST: This 2nd day of April, 2013



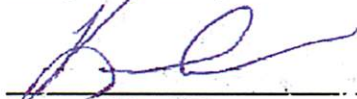
Emergency Management – Director



Chairman
Effingham County Board of Commissioners



County Administrator
Effingham County



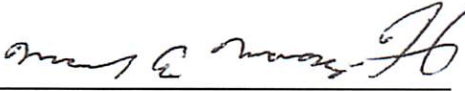
Mayor, City of Rincon




Mayor, City of Springfield



Mayor, City of Guyton



American Red Cross
Savannah Chapter



Sheriff
Effingham County



Coroner
Effingham County



Amateur Radio Emergency Service
Effingham County

**Effingham County, Georgia
Mass Fatality Mortuary Plan
Emergency Management Agency**

A. Introduction

The Effingham County Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) assigns the responsibility for the recovery of fatalities, identification of fatalities, and morgue services to the Effingham County Coroner. This Mass Fatality Mortuary Plan details those responsibilities and the responsibilities of additional Emergency Support Function agencies and departments during the recovery, identification process and morgue operations. In the event of a mass fatality incident, additional outside resources will be required from either the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) or the Effingham County Coroner. The initial requests for state assistance will be submitted to the Georgia State Medical Examiner's office by the Effingham County Coroner; if needed, secondary request will be forwarded to the State Operations Center through the Effingham County Emergency Operations Center. If DMORT is requested it will be more than 24 hours before the first team elements arrive. This MFM Plan also defines areas where human remains will be stored until the DMORT Mobile Morgue can be deployed.

B. Organization

ICS/NIMS - All mass fatality incidents shall be managed following the National Incident Management System (ICS/NIMS). The recovery of human remains from the incident location shall be overseen by the Effingham County Coroner falling under the operations section of the incident organization chart. See Appendix A.

C. Definitions

1. Mass Fatality Incident - Any Situation in which there are more human bodies to be recovered and examined than can be handled by the usual local resources.
2. Temporary Morgue - Local holding area for human remains. Remains will be moved to a portable morgue / examination center when established by the GBI or DMORT.
3. Examination Center - Established by the Effingham County Emergency Management Agency at the request of the Effingham County Coroner.
4. DMORT - Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team DMORT is a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and may be requested by local agencies through their local emergency management agency. DMORT is comprised of private citizens, each with a particular field of expertise in forensic science, evidence recovery and processing, funeral services, or mortuary operations. During emergency response, DMORT works under the direction of the local authorities and provides technical assistance and personnel to recover, identify, and process deceased victims of mass fatality events.
5. Mass Fatality Trailer – Region J refrigerated mobile container which has the capability of temporarily storing 44 bodies, currently stored in the Hospice of Savannah storage yard located at 1674 Chatham Parkway Savannah Ga. 31405; Contact the Region J coordinator for pickup assistance at 912-667-1542.

D. Responsibilities

1. Effingham County Coroner ESF13
 - a. Provides personnel & support to the incident management and EOC teams.
 - b. Responsible for all documentation of human remains throughout the entire event including incident documentation, temporary morgue, morgue/examination center, sifting site, and release to families.
 - c. Leads fatality assessment team.

- d. Requests resources from the EOC.
 - e. Stocks all needed forms for documentation.
 - f. Provides personnel and support to the family assistance center.
 - g. Lead agency for release of public information concerning human remains.
2. Effingham County Sheriff's Office ESF 13
- a. Provides personnel & support to the incident management and EOC teams.
 - b. Provides 24/7 security at the incident location, temporary morgue, morgue/examination center and family assistance center.
 - c. Provides escorts during the transportation of human remains between the incident location, temporary morgue and morgue/examination center.
 - d. Provides assistance as needed to the coroner during the fatality assessment.
 - e. Assists in the release of information concerning human remains.
 - f. Lead investigative agency or provides assistance to federal agencies such as NTSB, FBI or GBI.
3. City of Rincon Police Department
City of Guyton Police Department
City of Springfield Police Department ESF 13
- a. Provides personnel and support to the incident management and EOC teams.
 - b. Provides 24/7 security at the incident location, temporary morgue, morgue / examination center and family assistance center within their respective jurisdictions or assists the Effingham County Sheriff's Office.
 - c. Provides escorts during the transportation of human remains between the incident location, temporary morgue and morgue/examination center within their respective jurisdictions or at the request of the Effingham County Sheriff's Office.
 - d. Provides assistance as needed to the coroner during the fatality assessment within their respective jurisdictions.
 - e. Assists in the release of information concerning human remains within their respective jurisdictions.
 - f. Lead investigative agency within their respective jurisdiction or provides assistance to federal agencies such as NTSB, FBI or GBI.
4. Effingham County Emergency Management ESF 5
- a. Provides personnel and support to the incident management and EOC teams.
 - b. Provides logistical support to the overall operation.
 - c. Acts as the liaison between local incident management team and state / federal resource requests.
 - d. Assists coroner as needed at the incident location, temporary morgue, morgue examination center or family assistance center.
 - e. Assists in the release of information concerning the overall incident.
 - f. Provides GIS / mapping assistance to the incident management team.
5. Effingham County Public Works ESF 3
- a. Provide transportation for the Mass Fatality Trailer (MFT)
 - b. Provides personnel & support to the incident management and EOC teams.
 - c. Provides technical support for the removal of debris necessary for the recovery of human remains.
 - d. Provides heavy equipment to assist in the recovery of human remains.
 - e. Provides assistance to ESF 13 agencies related to transportation issues including signage and barricades.

6. American Red Cross ESF 6
 - a. Provides personnel and support to the incident management and EOC teams as requested.
 - b. Provides feeding of first responders and morgue personnel during the event.
 - c. Provides support including personnel, logistics and mental health counselor needs at the family assistance center.
7. Effingham County Amateur Radio Emergency Service ESF 2
 - a. Provides personnel and assistance to the incident management and EOC teams as requested.
 - b. Provides mobile communications and command units to locations as requested by the incident management or EOC teams.
 - c. Amateur radio may be requested to assist with communication between multiple field locations and the EOC.
8. Effingham County Fire Rescue ESF 4
 City of Rincon Fire Department
 City of Guyton Fire Department
 City of Springfield Fire Department
 - a. Provides personnel and support to the incident management and EOC teams.
 - b. Provides fire suppression, extrication, heavy rescue and hazardous materials activities.
 - c. Provides support to the Effingham County coroner during the recovery of human remains.
 - d. Assists the Effingham County Coroner in the search for and recovery of human remains as requested.
9. Effingham County Emergency Medical Service ESF 8
 Effingham County Health Department
 - a. Provides personnel and support to the incident management and EOC teams as requested.
 - b. Provides technical assistance to the overall incident related to public health issues.
 - c. Provides EMS coverage for first responders and morgue workers.
 - d. Provides EMS coverage at the family assistance center.

E. Operations

1. Fatality Assessment Team
 - a. Team Makeup - The fatality assessment team shall consist of, at a minimum, the Effingham County Coroner or Deputy Coroner, representative of the on-site incident management team, and the lead investigator from the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction. Additional personnel may be added to the assessment team as needed by the Effingham County Coroner.
 - b. Scene Safety - The safety of the scene must be assessed and clearance issued by the incident commander and / or incident safety officer before the assessment team enters. Assessment team members must wear the level of protective clothing or equipment deemed necessary by the Incident Commander when conducting the assessment of fatalities.
 - c. Assessment – The assessment should at a minimum include;
 - i. Potential or real number of fatalities.
 - ii. Conditions of bodies

- iii. Level of difficulty in recovery, types and numbers of personnel needed.
 - iv. Types of Equipment needed.
 - v. Accessibility of the incident scene.
 - vi. Possible biological, chemical, physical, or radiological hazards.
 - d. Tasks – The assessment team should also complete the following task;
 - i. Begin the formulation of a plan for documentation, body recovery, and transportation.
 - ii. Select a temporary holding area for remains that will be used until the examination center or crime lab is prepared to receive additional bodies.
 - iii. Communicate with the Emergency Operations Center concerning logistical support including any requests for outside assistance including the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) and DMORT.
 - iv. Determine which one of the pre-designated morgue/examination centers will be used or if another area near the incident will be used upon the arrival of the GBI or DMORT.
- 2. Existing Morgue Facilities
 - a. Local Facilities - Local morgue facilities normally used by the Effingham County Coroner will be utilized for as long as possible. Currently the Effingham County Hospital can store two (2) fatalities, Riggs Funeral Home can store three (3) fatalities and Strickland’s Funeral Home can store three (3) fatalities in both their Springfield facility and their Pooler facility. These facilities have a very low capacity and incidents with more than 6 fatalities occurring at the same time will require additional resources.
 - b. Public Health Disaster - During major public health emergencies the Effingham County coroner will utilize existing facilities and make every effort possible to expedite the release of human remains to families.
- 3. Temporary Morgue / Mass Fatality Trailer
 - a. Location -The Mass Fatality Trailer location will be determined by the ability of ESF 13 agencies to provide security, size and findings of the fatality assessment team. Every effort possible shall be made to co-locate the Mass Fatality Trailer and the morgue/examination center which will be established in the following days by the Effingham County Emergency Management Agency or DMORT.
 - b. Facility - Human remains will be transported from the incident to the secure area where the Mass Fatality Trailer will be staged. Remains will then be taken to the morgue/examination center when it becomes operational as requested by the morgue/examination site management.
 - c. Security - Shall be provided at the Mass Fatality Trailer location **24/7** by primary or support agencies within ESF-13. If local law enforcement assets are taxed, the emergency management agency shall request additional resources through the state operations center. Security / ID badge system shall be established to determine entry into this secure area.
 - d. Recovery - The Effingham County coroner shall ensure that the Mass Fatality Trailer is cleaned and returned to Hospice of Savannah after its use is no longer needed.
- 4. Morgue / Examination Center
 - a. Location - Considerations as to the specific location of the morgue/examination center must include access, security, and findings of the fatality assessment

team. If possible the Mass Fatality Trailer and the morgue/examination center should be co-located. To facilitate this, county parks or other large areas owned by local governments should be considered based on the incident. Additionally, based on the needs assessed by the fatality assessment team the Emergency Operations Center should work with the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority to locate empty warehouses that could be used for the morgue/examination center. The Effingham County Emergency Management Agency will have current memorandums of agreements for the use of pre-identified buildings.

- b. Facility – If available, the GBI / DMORT will respond with all of the necessary supplies to establish the morgue / examination operation.

5. Long Term Examination - Sifting Site

- a. Need - In any mass fatality incident in which there is extensive property destruction, the need for a long term off-site examination "sifting" center will exist. The Effingham County coroner will make this determination based on the findings of the fatality assessment team. The sifting site will likely remain functional long after operations at the scene; temporary morgue, morgue/examination center, and family assistance center have been terminated. It shall be the responsibility of the Effingham County coroner to assure proper support and operation of this site as long as required.

- b. Site Selection -The site should be separated from the incident, temporary morgue and morgue/examination center. Just as with the other location, this site must remain completely secure and accessible. The Effingham County Emergency Management Agency will have current memorandums of agreements for the use of pre-identified buildings.

c. Equipment Needs

- i. Evidence storage
- ii. Refrigeration
- iii. Communications
- iv. Protective gear
- v. Worker safety / infection control
- vi. Worker rehab area including food & restrooms
- vii. Critical incident stress debriefing
- viii. Tents
- ix. Heavy equipment for debris removal at incident location

d. Transportation

- i. Dump trucks for transportation of debris to sifting center
- ii. Transportation of human remains recovered at the sifting site to the morgue / examination center

e. Special Equipment

Sifting grids, hand tools, and wheelbarrows

f. Personnel

- i. DMORT / GBI anthropologist, evidence technicians.
- ii. Representatives from Effingham County Coroner's Office
- iii. Scribes
- iv. Registrar
- v. Bomb tech
- vi. **24/7** site security

6. **Family Assistance Center**
 - a. **Location** -The family assistance center should be established, if possible, in a county / city owned facility, the National Guard Armory in Springfield is another possible location. Some other county facilities that should be considered are the Effingham County Annex and the Effingham County Senior Center. The Emergency Management Agency shall maintain current Memorandums of Agreements on available facilities.
 - b. **Personnel** - The Effingham County Coroner's Office shall be in charge of the initial setup of the center. Staffing for the family assistance center shall be provided by local funeral home staff, Red Cross, local Church Organizations, Salvation Army, other local volunteer organizations, Sheriff's Office, EMS, and Emergency Management.
 - c. **Security** - Should be provided 24/7 by the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction or mutual aid law enforcement agencies. Families should be sheltered from the media at all times.
7. **Family Assistance Center - Specific Position Responsibilities;**
 - a. **Family Assistance Center Team Leader**
Appointed by the Effingham County Coroner
 - i. Overall supervisor
 - ii. Establishes ante-mortem data acquisition and entry plan.
 - iii. Coordinates operation with registrar/records supervisor.
 - iv. Conducts daily briefing with families before media briefings.
 - v. Conducts daily briefing with media in a secure area away from the families.
 - vi. Coordinates center security and transportation plans.
 - vii. Establishes and supervises death notification procedures with medical, psychological, and religious personnel.
 - viii. Coordinates roles of family assistance team members.
 - ix. Coordinates relations with outside agencies.
 - x. Serves as member of death notification team.
 - xi. Provides for critical incident stress debriefing.
 - b. **Coroner Representatives**
Appointed by the Effingham County Coroner
 - i. Functions in a liaison role and general inquiry needs.
 - ii. Ensures that the release of human remains to the families is conducted according to Effingham County Coroner's policy, Effingham County Ordinance and Georgia Law.
 - c. **Family Interview Personnel**
Appointed by the Family Assistance Center Team Leader
Interviews family members to obtain critical ante-mortem data following established procedures for the incident.
 - d. **Data Entry Personnel**
Appointed by the Family Assistance Center Team Leader
Enters and transfers ante-mortem data collected at the family assistance center to the morgue/examination center.
 - e. **Effingham County IT Department**
Appointed by the EMA Director through the IT Department Head

Ensures computer and landline communications from the Family Assistance Center to other critical locations.

f. Translators

Appointed by the EMA Director

Provides support as needed

g. Housekeeping

Appointed by the EMA Director

Provides housekeeping services as needed.

8. Logistical Support

Multiple logistical issues will have to be addressed by the Emergency Operations Center in order to adequately support the overall operations. Effingham County Emergency Management shall utilize existing resources to provide the following potential needs in support of recovery and morgue operations:

a. Body Bags

b. Potable Water

c. Generators

d. Refrigerated Trucks

e. Forklift and Heavy Equipment

f. Fuel

g. Communications

h. Restrooms

9. Crisis Counseling - Is a critical component to any mass fatality incident. Multiple agencies within Effingham County have their own policies concerning crisis counseling. During any mass fatality incident, it is the responsibility of the incident commander and county coroner to ensure that adequate crisis counseling is provided for all personnel associated with the event at every location where recovery, identification, and examination are conducted including the incident scene, temporary morgue, morgue/examination site, sifting site, and family assistance center.

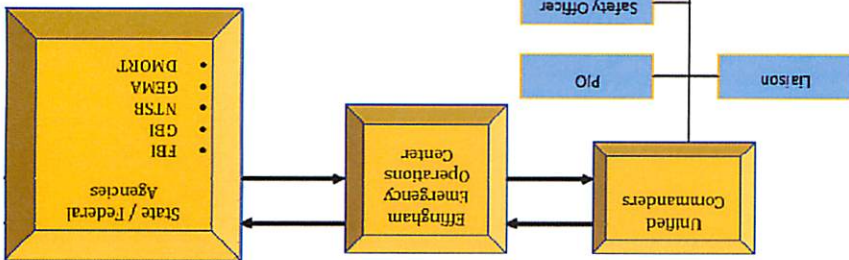
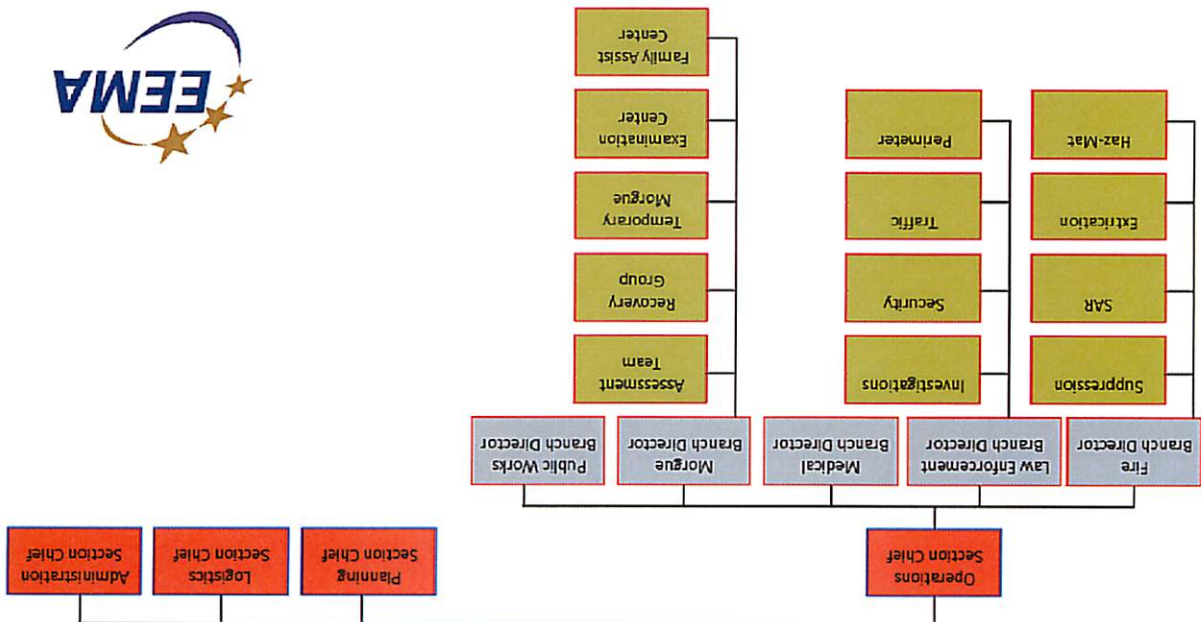
10. Autopsies

Deaths in a pandemic will usually not require autopsies since autopsies are not indicated for the confirmation of influenza as the cause of death. However, for the purpose of public health surveillance (e.g. confirmation of the first cases at the start of the pandemic) respiratory tract specimens or long tissue for culture or direct antigen testing could be collected. Post-mortem serological testing is not optimal, but could be performed if 8-10 ml of blood can be collected from a sub-clavian puncture post-mortem. Permission will be required from next of kin for this purpose.

11. Religious Considerations Special Populations

A number of religious and ethnic groups have specific directives about how bodies are managed after death. Jews, Hindus, Muslims, and other groups all have specific directions for the treatment of bodies and for funerals. The wishes of the family will provide guidance. However, if no family is available, request for guidance and assistance will be made to the appropriate house of worship in the nearest community in which the ethnic group of the deceased resides.

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 Appendix "A"
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