

# Mass Casualty/Mass Fatality Annex Carbon County Emergency Operations Plan



Emergency Room Access  
Beartooth Hospital and Health Care

**June 2010**

## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	3
II.	Purpose.....	3
III.	Legal Authorities.....	3
IV.	Situation and Assumptions.....	4
V.	Concept of Operations.....	5
VI.	Responsibilities.....	8
VII.	Direction and Control.....	10
VIII.	Annex Maintenance.....	10
Appendices		
A.	Dead Bodies Identification Form.....	11
B.	Sequential Numbers for Unique Referencing.....	13
C.	Body Inventory Sheet.....	14

## **I. Introduction**

A mass fatality incident can be defined most simply as “an incident where more deaths occur than can be handled by local resources.” Local resources available in Carbon County are limited and it would take few fatalities to exhaust these resources. Three or more fatalities could overwhelm the trauma care system, however, the county coroner (sheriff) is expected to handle up to ten fatalities locally before requesting state assistance.

Mass casualty and mass fatality incidents can be very complex and very intense incidents requiring coordination and communications across multiple agencies. This annex incorporates information from the Beartooth Hospital and Health Center Mass Fatality Management Plan.

## **II. Purpose**

This Annex provides guidance for mass casualty and/or mass fatality incidents that go beyond the scope of daily operations.

## **III. Legal Authorities**

Title 7-4-2911. Duties of County Coroner

Authority for collection, identification, storage, and release of remains placed under the purview of the local jurisdiction coroner.

7-4-2915. Custody and Disposition of bodies held pending investigation

46-4-103. Autopsy – when conducted, scope

Guides coroner to order an autopsy when advisable. Consent of next of kin not required for autopsy if ordered by coroner, county attorney, or attorney general.

46-4-110. Powers of Coroner

Includes pronouncing fact of death, certifying and amending death certificates, issuing subpoenas, ordering autopsies, conducting examinations, ordering a body disinterred, conducting inquests, and ordering cessation of activity hindering collection of information or evidence.

46-4-122. Human deaths requiring inquiry by Coroner

Listing circumstances surrounding a human death that can lead to inquiry.

50-15-403. Preparation and filing of death or fetal death certificate

50-15-405. Authorization for removal of body from place of death

## **IV. Situation and Assumptions**

### **Situation**

Emergencies in Carbon County, including but not limited to structural and wildland fire, flooding, earthquake, landslide, hazardous material spills, a transportation accident, severe winter storms, a disease incident, and acts of violence could produce mass casualties or mass fatalities. The number of persons affected may range from two to hundreds and could include residents and visitors. The situation could last from a few hours, for example a flash flood or dam breach, to a longer period of time, for example a disease epidemic.

The Sheriff in Carbon County is also the coroner. All fulltime sheriff deputies and the Fromberg Chief of Police are also trained as coroners for a total of nine coroners in the county. There are two funeral homes in the county. Morticians can prepare death certificates for which a coroner can then sign-off.

### **Assumptions**

- 1) Mass fatality events are different from mass casualty incidents.
- 2) Both mass fatality and mass casualty events put tremendous strain on responders and the community.
- 3) These types of events generate a lot of media attention.
- 4) Well-meaning people and family members will come directly to the scene.
- 5) Family members will seek information on unaccounted-for loved ones.
- 6) Mass fatality and mass casualty events are frequently crime scenes.
- 7) An event that produces mass fatalities would occur on top of the “normal case load” of fatalities (hospital, mortuaries, etc.) in the county.
- 8) Emergency responders may not report to duty if they or their family members have been injured or killed.
- 9) If fatalities are widespread, infrastructure may be damaged—posing risks to responders. When this is the case, it will take longer to perform critical tasks.
- 10) The federal government has Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT) resources to support local mass fatality management.
- 11) Post-incident mental health services may be needed for responders, families, and community members depending on the duration, extent, and magnitude of the event.
- 12) Management of the dead is one of the most difficult aspects of disaster response. The way victims of a disaster are treated has profound and long-lasting effect on the mental health of survivors and communities. In addition, correct identification of the dead has legal significance for inheritance and insurance that can impact families and relatives for many years after a disaster.

## **V. Concept of Operations**

Mass casualty and mass fatality events will be managed using the National Incident Management System or NIMS.

### **Activation**

Activation of this Annex will occur when a mass casualty or fatality-producing event exceeds local response capabilities. Depending on the nature of the incident, demand on response resources may increase gradually, or may be such that local resources are quickly overwhelmed. The Annex may be activated by individuals in any of the following positions; Chief Elected Official, County Sheriff/Coroner, or County Disaster and Emergency Coordinator.

Depending on the type, extent, duration, and magnitude of the casualty or fatality-producing incident, a Unified Command Structure will be established and the Emergency Operations Center activated. See Section VI. Responsibilities for the list of which resources may needed to be called out.

### **Support to Tactical and On-Scene Operations**

Tactical and on-scene support will be provided through the Incident Command Structure. The Incident Commander(s) will be responsible for overseeing an organization that provides for incident logistics, communications, finance, plans, operations, communications, and information management.

On-scene operations will work first to contain and stabilize a disaster scene. Functions that may be necessary will include; scene control and security, communications with Incident Command and within the scene, setting up triage, providing initial treatment on-scene, and conducting/coordinating transportation, among others.

- EMS will respond with all available ambulances or the maximum number that can be provided holding one or more in reserve as needed given other ongoing conditions and situations.
- Each incident victim will be assigned a unique identifier at the incident scene so that they can be tracked through the entire system of care. This identification numbering system will be shared with BHHC and other hospitals receiving incident victims.
- Triage will be performed by the first on-scene emergency medical responders. On-scene responders will report the situation back to dispatch, requesting additional resources (equipment and supplies, transportation, and/or trained medical personnel) to address and care for casualties, fatalities, and uninjured individuals as needed.
- Initial treatment will be given on-scene as necessary until victims requiring additional care can be transported.

- Deceased must be left in place until released by the coroner. All bodies, body parts, personal effects, and other evidence must be documented.
- Transportation of injured and dead will be accomplished by the three ground ambulance services in the county until their capacity is reached. Once capacity of the three services in the county is exceeded or for backfilling behind responding ambulances, assistance will be requested from neighboring counties.
- Air ambulance will be requested from Billings as necessary and integrated into the on-scene operation through Incident Command.
- Resources for transportation of individuals without injury can be requested through Incident Command. In the case of a school bus accident, the local school district will provide one or more buses to collect/house uninjured children and take them to safety.

Beartooth Hospital and Health Center (BHHC) in Red Lodge will serve as the emergency treatment center and mass casualty collection point for mass casualty/mass fatality events in the county as appropriate.

Based upon severity of injuries and the judgment of the responder(s) on scene, casualties will be sent to the nearest appropriate medical facility able to handle victims. The facilities that may be used include the BHHC, Billings Clinic and St. Vincent's Healthcare in Billings, the hospital in Columbus, and/or medical facilities in Cody, Powell, and Lovell, Wyoming. One or more of these facilities may be used for the same incident.

### **Support to Morgue Operations**

Within Carbon County there is capacity for the refrigerated storage of three decedents—at the Smith-Olcott Funeral Home in Red Lodge. At any given time, some or all of the capacity may be in use due to natural mortalities unrelated to any mass fatality incident.

If the numbers of dead exceed local capacity, incident management will select from several options.

- Establish a temporary morgue on-scene (using refrigeration as needed),
- Establish a temporary morgue at the county fairgrounds, or
- Transport decedents to private mortuaries in Billings, or
- Request a federal Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT)--in situations with fatalities that exceed local and state capabilities

Management of the dead involves, coordination, addressing infectious disease risks, body recovery, storage of dead bodies, identification of dead bodies, information, long-term storage and disposal of human remains, and support to families and relatives.

For additional guidance on these subjects, refer to “*Management of Dead Bodies after Disaster: A Field Manual for First Responders*” on file with the Carbon County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator. The manual was prepared by the Pan-American Health Organization and revised in 2009. ([www.paho.org](http://www.paho.org))

### **Records Management (Victim Processing)**

All ante and post-mortem information and records should be handled as evidence.

Four categories of files should be established and maintained.

- 1) Unidentified remains
- 2) Missing person reports
- 3) Identified remains
- 4) Court-issued presumptive death certificates

### **Records Management (Accounting and Finance)**

Expenses that may be reimbursable include personnel time and purchases of equipment and supplies requested and approved through the Incident Command. Detailed documentation should be maintained and will be required for reimbursement.

### **Death Registration and Certification**

By state statute, death certification can be accomplished by an attending physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or a county coroner. The county sheriff/coroner will assemble a team as needed to provide for timely and accurate certification of deaths.

Death registration falls under the responsibility of the Carbon County Clerk and Recorder. The Clerk and Recorder will develop a numbering system if the existing system is not adequate. The Clerk and Recorder will assemble a team to provide support for the timely and accurate registration of deaths.

### **Planning, Training and Exercises**

- Convene all appropriate local agencies and hold at least one mass casualty/mass fatality exercise in the county annually.
- Share information related to mass fatality training opportunities as they arise.
- Conduct After Action Reviews following any mass casualty/mass fatality incident in the county.

## VI. Responsibilities

Entity	Role
American Red Cross	<p>Provides basic First Aid            Provides trained personnel or volunteers to assist families and to aid in helping identify the dead            Assists in re-unification efforts            Assists law enforcement in notification of next-of-kin            Assists in hospitals, infirmaries, and morgues as available</p>
Beartooth Hospital and Health Center <i>(please see BHHHC's Mass Fatality Management Plan)</i>	<p>Establishes an internal Mass Fatality Incident unit            Provides medical care            Stabilizes and prepares patients who need advanced critical care for transport to regional hospitals            Provides support for decontamination            Establishes point-of-contact for incident and public information            Locks down facility as needed to focus on response            Requests additional supplies and resources through Incident Command            Holds decedents until transportation to morgue is arranged            Assists in obtaining post-incident stress management services</p>
Beartooth Humane Alliance	<p>Assists in arranging temporary care for pets whose owners have been injured or killed            Assists in re-unification of people and their pets</p>
Carbon County Clerk and Recorder	Records Death Certificates
Carbon County DES	<p>Coordinates overall disaster response            Secures additional resources through state and federal agencies            Coordinates with and supports requests from field            Disseminates emergency information to the public            Works with IC to designate temporary morgue sites            Arranges for delivery of refrigerated trucks, body bags, and other resources to hospital or other facilities            Assists in identification of staging areas            Obtains post-incident stress management services as needed            Facilitates After Action Review</p>
Carbon County Sheriff/Coroner	<p>Performs coroner functions            Perimeter control and scene security            Assists in identification of alternate transportation routes            Documents, reconstructs, and investigates as appropriate            Oversees management of human remains            Releases deceased when no longer needed for investigation            Supplements dispatch staff as needed to handle added communication workload            Performs search and rescue as needed            Establishes procedures for releasing names of deceased            Notifies next-of-kin            Secures and returns personal property and possessions of decedents to next-of-kin</p>
Carbon County Road Department	<p>Assists in identification of alternate transportation routes            Provides sanders, plows/graders to open and maintain access            Provides equipment and operators for debris removal</p>

Entity	Role
Emergency Medical Services	Provides triage, aid, and treatment Provides transportation of injured and deceased Maintains or re-establishes capacity to respond to other simultaneous incidents
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Provides DMORT team as requested
Fire Departments	Provides aid to viable patients including rescue, triage, treatment, and transportation Conducts on-site decontamination of survivors if necessary
Montana Department of Environmental Quality	Provides technical assistance for environmental concerns
Montana Department of Transportation	Provides support for road closures and re-routing of traffic (signs, barriers, messages on road report lines, etc.) Provides sanders and plows/ graders to open and maintain access Provides equipment and operators for removal of debris on roads.
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Provides technical assistance on animal diseases
Montana Highway Patrol	Assists in traffic control and re-routing Posts incident reports on line for public access Transports harvested organs as requested Requests wrecker services as needed
Montana Public Health Response Team	Supports location, removal, and identification of remains Assists Sheriff with notification of next-of-kin Assists with preparing and filing death certificates Assists with processing, preparation, and releasing of human remains to next-of-kin in emergency Assists in obtaining post-incident stress management services
Police Departments-local	Perimeter control and scene security Provides security/access control at hospital if requested Assist in documentation, reconstruction, investigation Assist in support of management of human remains Notify next-of-kin
Private Mortuaries (Dahl and Olcott)	Provides for storage of human remains Follow established procedures for releasing names of deceased
School District	Contacts parents if/when school children are involved Provides buses for transportation as requested
US Department of Agriculture	Provides technical assistance on animal diseases Recovers and disposes of animal carcasses
Veterinarians	Provides technical assistance on domestic animal diseases, Treats and/or euthanizes domestic animals involved incidents as requested by owners

## **VII. Direction and Control**

The incident will be managed using the National Incident Management System or NIMS. Depending on the specific incident, an Incident Command or Unified Command will be established. Likely functional areas participating in the Unified Command will include Law Enforcement, Fire/EMS, Disaster and Emergency Services, Beartooth Hospital and Health Center, and the affected school district. The dispatch center operated by the County Sheriff will be heavily impacted and the Emergency Operations Center may need to be activated.

The Incident Command organization will coordinate and direct the overall response in communication with the commander on scene, establishing an Incident Command Post close to the scene, and ordering and supplying resources as needed.

## **VIII. Annex Maintenance**

Maintenance of this annex is the responsibility of Carbon County Disaster and Emergency Services. The annex will be reviewed annually, preferably with the Local Emergency Planning Committee, at the same time as the basic plan and other annexes. Changes to this annex will be documented in the Record of Changes found at the beginning of the plan.

## Appendix A. Body Identification Form

**Body/Body Part Code:**

(Use unique numbering and include on associated files, photographs or stored objects.)

**Possible identity of body:**

**Person Reporting**

Name:

Official Status:

Place & Date:

Signature:

**Recovery details** (Include place, date, time, by whom and circumstances of finding. Indicate if other bodies were recovered in the same area, including name and possible relationship, if identified)

### A. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

<b>A.1</b>	<b>General Condition (mark one):</b>	a)	Complete body	Incomplete body (describe):		Body Part (describe):		
		b)	Well preserved	Decomposed	Partially skeletonized	Skeletonized		
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Apparent Sex (mark one and describe evidence):</b>	Male	Female	Probably male	Probably female	Undetermined		
		Describe evidence (genitals, beard, etc):						
<b>A.3</b>	<b>Age Group (mark one):</b>	Infant	Child	Adolescent	Adult	Elderly		
<b>A.4</b>	<b>Physical Description (measure or mark one):</b>	Height (crown to heel):		Short	Average	Tall		
		Weight:		Slim	Average	Fat		
<b>A.5</b>	<b>a) Head Hair:</b>	Color:	Length:	Shape:	Baldness:	Other:		
	<b>b) Facial Hair:</b>	None	Moustache	Beard	Color:	Length:		
	<b>c) Body Hair</b>	Describe:						
<b>A.6</b>	<b>Distinguishing features:</b>	Continue on additional sheets if needed. If possible, include a sketch of the main findings.						
	<b>Physical</b>							
	<b>Surgical implants or prosthesis</b>							
	<b>Skin marks – (scars, tattoos, piercings, birthmarks, moles etc.)</b>							
	<b>Apparent injuries:</b> include location, side							
	<b>Dental Condition:</b> (crowns (gold teeth), adornments, false teeth.) Describe any obvious features							

**B. ASSOCIATED EVIDENCE**

<b>B.1</b>	<b>Clothing:</b>	Type of clothes, colors, fabrics, brand names, repairs. Describe in as much detail as possible
<b>B.2</b>	<b>Footwear:</b>	Type (boot, shoes, sandals), color, brand, size: describe in as much detail as possible
<b>B.3</b>	<b>Eyewear:</b>	Glasses (color, shape), contact lenses: describe in as much detail as possible
<b>B.4</b>	<b>Personal items:</b>	Watch, jewelry, wallet, keys, photographs, mobile phone (incl. number), medication, cigarettes, etc.: Describe in as much detail as possible
<b>B.5</b>	<b>Identity Documents</b>	Identity card, driving license, credit card, video club card, etc. Take photocopy if possible. Describe the information contained.

**C: RECORDED INFORMATION**

<b>C.1</b>	<b>Fingerprints:</b>	Yes	No	By whom? Stored where?:
<b>C.2</b>	<b>Photographs of body:</b>	Yes	No	By whom? Stored where?:

**D: IDENTITY**

<b>D.1</b>	<b>Hypothesis of identity:</b>	Explain reasons for attributing a possible identity:
------------	--------------------------------	--

**E: STATUS OF BODY**

<b>Stored:</b>	(morgue, refrigerated container, temporary burial; describe location):
	Under whose responsibility:
<b>Released:</b>	To whom and date:
	Authorized by:
	Final destination:

## Appendix B. Sequential Numbers for Unique Referencing

**For recommended unique numbering (place-team/person-number).  
When using the list below, cross each number off the list when it is used to avoid using it**

001	026	051	076						
002	027	052	077						
003	028	053	078						
004	029	054	079						
005	030	055	080						
006	031	056	081						
007	032	057	082						
008	033	058	083						
009	034	059	084						
010	035	060	085						
011	036	061	086						
012	037	062	087						
013	038	063	088						
014	039	064	089						
015	040	065	090						
016	041	066	091						
017	042	067	092						
018	043	068	093						
019	044	069	094						
020	045	070	095						
021	046	071	096						
022	047	072	097						
023	048	073	098						
024	049	074	099						
5	050	075	100						

