



EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
INSTITUTE

Unit 6. Family Assistance Support Operations



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Visual 6.1
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Family Needs After an Incident

Three types of needs:

- Information needs
- Physical needs
- Grief counseling needs

The FAC helps to meet these needs.

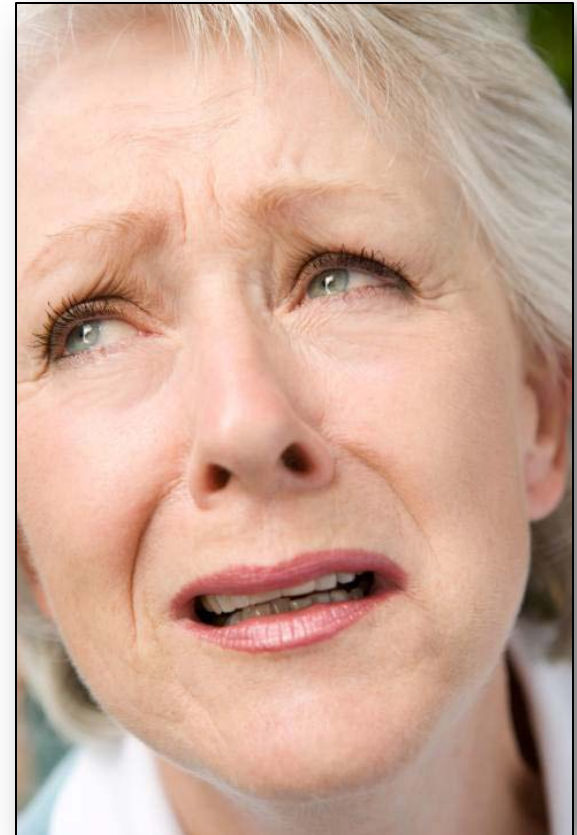


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Visual 6.2
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Purpose of the FAC

- To provide family members with information about the event
- To provide family members access to services
- To provide a controlled facility where family members can receive and provide information while their privacy is protected
- To allow investigators and the ME/Coroner access to family members to collect antemortem information



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Visual 6.3
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Unit Objectives

- Describe the importance of providing effective and compassionate services to family members.
- Explain how the Family Assistance Center (FAC) is created as the focus of these services.
- Describe how the type of event impacts the operation of the FAC.
- Describe the functional areas of the FAC.



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Unit Objectives

- **Identify who could be involved in setting up and running the FAC.**
- **Describe how to conduct a family briefing.**
- **Resolve special issues surrounding family assistance.**
- **Determine when to close the FAC.**



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FAC Location Considerations

- Proximity to the incident
- Privacy, comfort, and security
- Functional areas and equipment
- Access

Plan on an average of
10 family members
visiting the FAC for
each victim.



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Providing Comfort for Families

What are some things that the FAC can provide to care for and support the families?



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Comfort for Families at the FAC

- Provide 24/7 assistance.
- Be open and honest about:
 - The procedures being taken to ensure that remains are identified properly.
 - How long it may take to identify remains.
- Provide professional child care services.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences.



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Visual 6.8
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Comfort for Families at the FAC

- Ensure that FAC workers are easily identifiable.
- Make medical treatment available.

**Think before speaking
with families!**



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Visual 6.9
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Family Access

What are some specific access procedures for the families and the staff at the FAC?



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Visual 6.10
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Family Security

- Designate specific secured entrances for families.
- Use check-in and checkout procedures.
- Assign each family a personal representative.
- Ensure that families are badged in an unobtrusive way so that they do not stand out.



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Visual 6.11
Mass Fatality Incident Response

FAC Staff Security

- Designate specific entrances for FAC staff.
- Use check-in and checkout procedures.
- Require identification (preferably badges).
- Verify the credentials of all volunteers.



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Visual 6.12
Mass Fatality Incident Response

FAC Functional Areas

- **Joint Family Support Operations Center and administrative offices**
- **Family briefing area (large general-assembly room)**



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Visual 6.13
Mass Fatality Incident Response

FAC Functional Areas

- Family communications center (phone, email, internet access for family members)
- Family reception and registration room
- Individual rooms for reflection and counseling
- Child-care area



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Visual 6.14
Mass Fatality Incident Response

FAC Functional Areas

- Interview area for Medical Examiner/Coroner
- Areas for local casework services, including housing, funds, etc.
- Individual rooms for next-of-kin notification



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Visual 6.15
Mass Fatality Incident Response

FAC Functional Areas

- **Medical area**
- **Transportation area**
- **Food service area**



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Visual 6.16
Mass Fatality Incident Response

FAC Equipment Needs

What equipment will be needed
at the FAC?



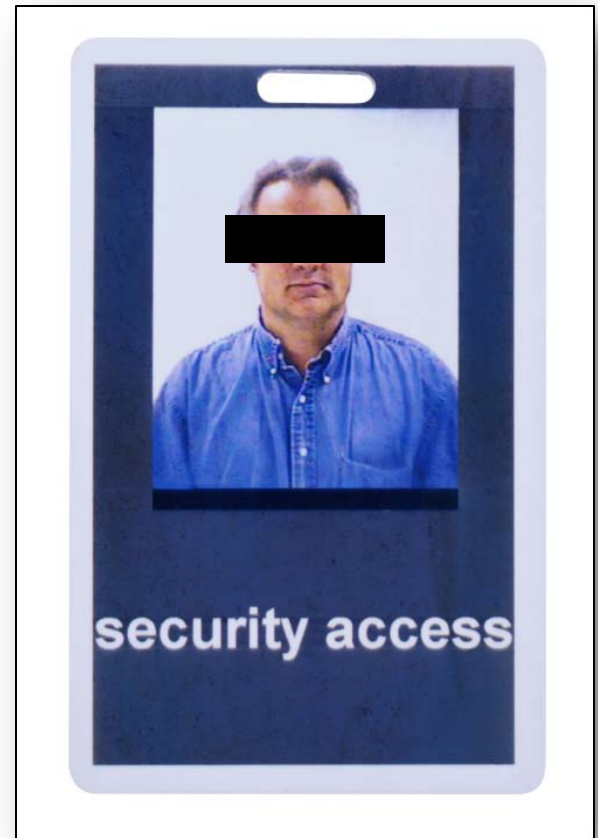
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Visual 6.17
Mass Fatality Incident Response

FAC Equipment Needs

Minimum equipment needs:

- Phone lines
- Office supplies
- Computers
- Fax machines
- Two-way communications with the morgue site
- ID making equipment
- Televisions/radios for news feed



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FAC Staffing

How do you determine staffing needs?



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Visual 6.19
Mass Fatality Incident Response

FAC Staffing

- **How many are estimated to be using the FAC?**
- **Are any family members likely to have special needs?**
- **What religions are likely to be represented among the families?**
- **Will meals be prepared and provided on site?**
- **Are sleeping arrangements on site or at a hotel close to the FAC?**
- **Will transportation be needed between the FAC and hotels, restaurants, etc.?**
- **What support services will be required?**



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Activity: Determine FAC Staffing

1. Work in your table group to complete this activity.
2. Read the scenario, and develop preliminary staffing for the Family Assistance Center.
3. Select a spokesperson to present your group's answers to the class.



You have 15 minutes to complete this activity.



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Conducting Family Briefings

- **Brief families before the media.**
- **Choose terms carefully.**
- **Be sensitive to ethnic diversity.**
- **Ensure appropriate voice and tone.**



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Visual 6.22
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Conducting Family Briefings

People believe:

- 55 percent nonverbal (eye contact, body language)
- 38 percent vocal (volume, pitch, tone)
- 7 percent verbal (content)



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Visual 6.23
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Family Briefing Substance

- Identification process
- Return of personal effects
- Explanation for why it takes so long

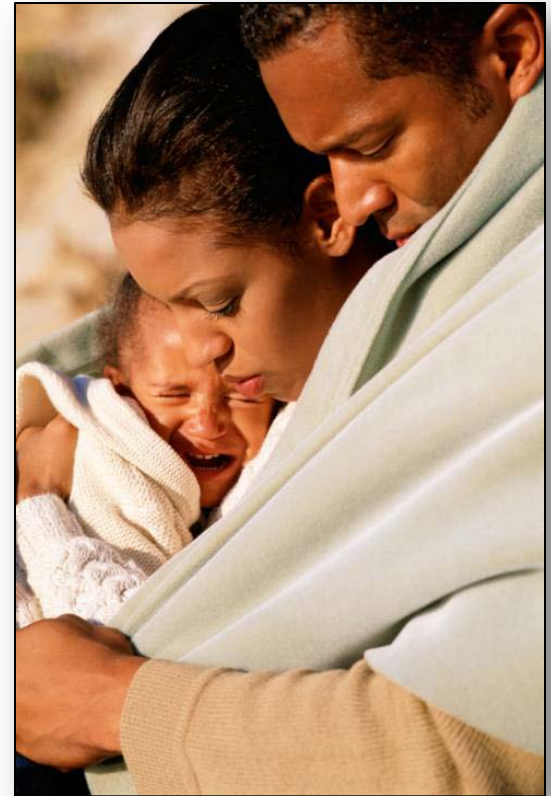


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Visual 6.24
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Site Visits and Memorial Services

- **Should be a coordinated event**
- **May not always be possible**



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Visual 6.25
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Taking Questions at Family Briefings

- Set ground rules.
- Remember that family members:
 - Come from all walks of life.
 - May display a wide range of emotions.



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Visual 6.26
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Closing Statement

Should cover:

- A summary of key points
- Any remaining housekeeping items
- The schedule for the next briefing



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Visual 6.27
Mass Fatality Incident Response

Closing the FAC

Before closing the FAC, consider:

- **The number of families still using the center.**
- **The probability that all remains will be recovered, identified, and returned within a reasonable timeframe.**
- **Other factors, such as the condition of the remains and decontamination requirements.**



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Unit Summary



Setting up the FAC



Operating the FAC



Closing the FAC



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