

# **State of Michigan Mass Fatality Resources**

## **Overview:**

The Michigan Mortuary Response Team (MI-MORT) and the Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU) were established to provide the State of Michigan with a mass fatality resource that can be readily deployed to any location within the State in response to an incident in which the number of fatalities has exceeded local or regional resources. Requests for mass fatality resources will proceed from the local to state level prior to any activations. To effectively respond to a mass fatality incident in rural locations, push pack trailers containing supplies for early initiation of site recovery operations, have been pre-deployed to designated regions across the state. In addition, two Mortuary Enhanced Remains Cooling Systems (MERC) have been purchased for storage and cooling of up to 96 human remains.

MI-MORT utilizes the Incident Command Structure (ICS) and IS 100, 200, 700 & 800 are required of team members. In addition, ICS 300 & 400 is required of the command team. MI-MORT operations are consistent with National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Disaster Mortuary Operational Response (DMORT) operational policies and guidelines, providing seamless integration of services should a federal response be required. Should the incident necessitate the decontamination of human remains and personal effects needed for identification purposes, additional resources from a Hazardous Materials Response Team (HAZ-MAT) will be required; MI-MORT does not have this capability.

## **Personnel:**

### **Michigan Mortuary Response Team (MI-MORT)**

This is a multi-disciplinary team that works under the medical authority of the Medical Examiner of the requesting jurisdiction, providing additional manpower and operational support during a mass fatality incident. Personnel can provide assistance with recovery, processing and identifying of deceased victims in a dignified manner. The MI-MORT staff is comprised of forensic professionals, funeral directors, search and recovery personnel and many others willing to assist in a mass fatality incident. Depending on the needs of the medical examiner, any component of the team can be deployed. The Assessment Team, comprised of MI-MORT command staff, will establish a liaison with the medical examiner to discuss resource requirements and deployment.

## **Team Components:**

### **Disaster Assistance Recovery Team (DART)**

This group focuses on the discovery, documentation and subsequent recovery of all artifacts involving human remains and contains personnel from law enforcement, medical examiners offices, forensic professionals and other specialists trained in preserving chain of custody. **This is not a search and rescue unit.**

### **Victim Information Center Team (VIC)**

Responsible for working directly with decedent's family, relatives and/or friends to gather ante-mortem information, through interviews, medical/dental record acquisition, DNA sampling, etc. This data is then transferred to the Morgue Identification Center to assist the medical examiner in making a positive identification of victims.

### **Disaster Portable Morgue Unit Team (DPMU)**

Responsible for inventory management of equipment and supplies, as well as the assembly and disassembly of the DPMU. If a request for the portable morgue (DPMU) is made by the local medical examiner jurisdiction, this group will also be deployed for managing the logistics associated with its use.

### **Morgue Operations Team (MOT)**

Responsible for assisting the medical examiner in processing disaster victim's remains for eventual identification. This group contains the morgue forensic specialist teams that gather the post mortem information and morgue admitting/processing teams that handle morgue documentation, remains management, personal effects, etc.

### **Morgue Identification Center Team (MIC)**

Coordinates the remains identification processing functions including: postmortem Victim Information Packet (VIP) data entry, VIP data analysis of ante and postmortem indicators, ante-mortem fingerprint and odontology teams, coordination of body x-ray comparisons, channeling positive identification reports to the medical examiner and case file management.

## **Equipment:**

### **Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU)**

Contains equipment and supplies necessary to initiate operations for a fully functional morgue or augment an existing morgue. Equipment and supplies are inventoried and stored within trailers according to a master load plan. The DPMU is designed to be erected inside of a functional, not currently occupied facility and has its own DPMU team. This team is responsible for assembly/disassembly of the infrastructure and inventory management of equipment and supplies. This unit, along with the DPMU

team, can be deployed independently if a full team activation is not required by the medical examiner. Site specifications for the DPMU are referenced in the State of Michigan Mass Fatality Plan.

## **MI-MORT Push Packs (Regions 3, 5, 6, 7, 8)**

Contains equipment and supplies necessary to initiate early site recovery operations. The trailer can be utilized as a field office for fatality management personnel once equipment and supplies have been off loaded. All materials are inventoried and stored according to a master load plan. This ensures consistency between each of the deployed push pack trailers in the event more than one trailer is needed for an incident.

## **MI-MORT Remains Cooling System**

The MERC system contains equipment and supplies for storage and cooling of up to 96 human remains. Two identical systems are stored in separate trailers; each contains equipment and supplies needed for cooling 48 human remains.

## **State Mass Fatality Resource Activation:**

The local Medical Examiner or local Emergency Manager determines the need for additional assistance during a mass fatality incident. Decisions are based on the ability of the jurisdiction to manage the number of decedents. The request for MI-MORT personnel or equipment will flow from the local jurisdiction through the State Emergency Management District Coordinator and communicated to the Regional Medical Coordination Center (RMCC). The district/region then follows the protocol for assessing the need and then communicating through the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) or Community Health Emergency Coordination Center (CHECC), as appropriate. State agencies will maintain responsibilities for further communications.

MI-MORT has an established toll-free line, 1-800-441-9330, monitored through the Michigan Funeral Directors Association's (MFDA) main office. A 24-hour answering service will obtain information needed and forward it to the OPHP state point of contact (POC) to initiate communications and determine activation of potential resources. The SEOC would be immediately notified of any request received via this 800 line.

Information requested from the jurisdiction includes:

1. Caller name and contact information
2. Local Medical Examiner name and contact information
3. Location and type of incident

Once approved by the State, a MI-MORT command staff representative will make contact with the requesting medical examiner jurisdiction to gather further information.

The MI-MORT Assessment Team will be assembled and in coordination with Michigan Department of Community Health-Office of Public Health Preparedness (MDCH-OPHP), arrange an initial meeting with the medical examiner. Further team activation will be made through SEOC, CHECC and MI-MORT command staff.

MDCH-OPHP CHECC Duty Officer contact information:

1. Email: [checcdeptcoor@michigan.gov](mailto:checcdeptcoor@michigan.gov)
2. Phone: 517-335-8330
3. Fax: 517-335-8732