



FEMORS NewsGram

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COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



It felt as though Christmas came early with completion of the new Command Trailer. Even those of us who knew what it was supposed to look like were impressed by the finished product. You, too, will be impressed when you see it at Annual Training.

There are a number of exciting potential team activities planned for coming years and we hope to involve as many members as possible, within funding limitations, to create opportunities for learning by doing. We strive to expand visibility to the various stakeholders through out the state as was done with the Broward County exercise.

A number of other States have looked to FEMORS for advice on setting up parts of their various organizational efforts. Our philosophy has been, and will continue to always be, "Our House is Your House". If we have anything that will benefit other response organizations, we will gladly share to save them from having to reinvent another wheel.

Likewise, we continue to stay involved in long range planning efforts on State, regional, and national levels so that we do not have to invent even more wheels. It's a diverse and hardworking group out there all striving to meet the preparedness challenges faced at all levels.

It is personally gratifying to continue representing you, the 200+ FEMORS members who have demonstrated sustained commitment for the past few years. Equally impressive is your incredible patience while waiting for that call to action.

The Groundhog Day tornados that ravaged Lake County demonstrate how unpredictable a call to action can be. While we had 50 members ready to respond within about 24 hours, the ME office was intact and they stayed calm and collected so no help was needed.

For all of that, and your friendship, **Thank you**, and may you all enjoy a fine and quiet New Year

Larry

DPMU READINESS

The DPMU accomplished its January 2007 readiness deadline. Final auditing and seemingly endless rechecking of all the details is coming to an end.

The command trailer modifications have been completed and it is in the process of final signage and licensing by UF as a State vehicle.



After signage is applied, it will be moved to the warehouse for storage and final loading of supplies.



Mock up of Signage Planned

The finished product shows fine craftsmanship and will serve as a show piece for FEMORS when deployed.



Propane Fueled Generator

The interior is designed to house the radio system, computer network server for morgue operations and limited administrative space for command functions.

Touring the interior shows:



Entryway to Radio Console/Work Area



Radio Console



Network Server Workstation Area



Storage and Power Panels



Galley



Water Closet



Main Work Area with Bunk Beds/
Counter (left side) Stowed



Main Work Area with Auxiliary
Counter (left side) Deployed



Lower Bunk Deployed
(Flip Side of Auxiliary Counter)

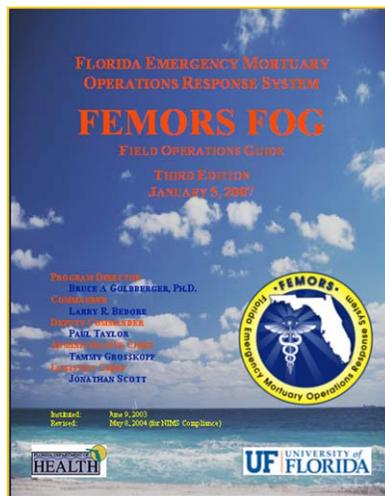
During the first 72 hours of deployment, when communications infrastructure is most likely to be compromised, the Command Post will be staffed 24/7 for monitoring radio communications with both Gainesville and field deployed Search and Recovery teams, if necessary.

It will also serve as the computer system hub for morgue operations and the Administrative Command Post.

Although cramped if too many people are present we should be able to maintain the Planning and Administrative functions here as well as a starting place for Logistics ordering during those early response days.

FOG THIRD EDITION 2007

The new and improved Field Operations Guide (FOG) was finalized in January and posted at the FEMORS web site. http://femors.org/docs/FEMORS_FOG_3rd_Edition_Final_010507.pdf



Over six months of revision and expansion work went into making this a more comprehensive source for everything you wanted to know about how fatality management in the field might look.

The Position Description section was completed to provide coverage of every position demonstrated in the Incident Command System (ICS) tables of organization for a full FEMORS deployment. This way any member asked to assume a particular role can rapidly see the duties, responsibilities and reporting relationships associated with the position.

Not unlike a football play book, and as with many of the skills one learns in a career, if a skill set is not exercised routinely it is likely to be forgotten in part. The FOG provides that quick refresher for stepping into a team role.

Highlights of the changes in the FOG will be part of this year's Annual Training. While this is not a quick read (277 pages) it behooves all members to take the time to do so, at least once. There will actually be some test questions at Annual Training based on the FOG; so be forewarned.

For example, the old term of Family Assistance Center has been replaced throughout the FOG with Victim Ante Mortem Data Center (VAMDC). This was due to confusion of the public during past events in seeking all sorts of "Family Assistance" especially from FEMA.

The FOG also now contains numerous preformatted forms such as log sheets and report forms for various elements of the mission. Depending on what a Medical Examiner needs, or if that office's set of forms will suffice, some or all could be used in a full blown event. These forms will be field tested during the Annual Training exercises so that improvements can be identified and incorporated.

Only another Katrina sized event would likely utilize all aspects of the FOG. Most should be smaller in scope. But that is the strength of the ICS system, it is flexible from small to large events.

TRAINING SESSIONS 2007

Registration forms for the three training sessions for 2007 have been distributed to all members. The deadline for registering is Monday, April 16th. If space permits, Inactive members may resume Active status by attending.

ANNUAL TRAINING/EXERCISE

The dates for this year's Annual Training will be Thursday, May 3rd through Saturday, May 5th at the warehouse in Orlando. Maps and directions to the warehouse will be sent directly to all who register.



FEMORS Top Secret Warehouse

This year's program will be vastly different from anything in the past. For starters, all training will take place at the warehouse where the Command Post Trailer, Check-In, DPMU, VAMDC (the new name for FAC), and IDC (Identification Center) will be staged.

Day 1 will likely be devoted to checking personnel in just like a real deployment, followed by any lecture subjects in classroom setting. It will also be used to make duty assignments and to let all responders know how the actual exercise on Day 2 is designed.

Day 2 will be devoted to hands-on processing of "victims". This will include Search and Recovery, morgue stations, VAMDC, IDC data entry and searching and (in a perfect world) matches for every set of remains!

Some of you may be called upon to assist by "volunteering" to be the victims carted though the morgue. Don't worry, no undressing to find those hidden tattoos will be done and no fingers will be removed for fingerprinting.

This will be a shake-down cruise of sorts for many aspects of a mission. Several glitches with the FOG's concepts of operations are likely to be discovered and that is the desired outcome. Finding the faults in a test situation is far preferable to finding them in a real event.

What the exercise may challenge the most is the ability of the Command structure to manage duty assignments and the ability of members to deal with down time with a positive attitude.

Command may find (among the registrants) too many of one discipline and not enough of others. So, the challenge is to find a fit for as many as possible. Inevitably, this will result in any number of team members working in areas outside their normal expectation. Such is the nature of the flexibility needed for such a diverse team and the key reason why the old adage to "Check your Ego at the door" comes in to play. No one can know with certainty where they will be needed to fill a gap. It also demonstrates the value of having a comprehensive FOG as the reference guide for those assuming roles foreign to them. What fun!?!

The other major challenge is down time. Waiting for the need to activate your area of work can be a frustrating experience. It happens in every event, usually in the first few days as the infrastructure is getting set up and mission details are being worked out. This happened in both the Hurricane Charley and Ivan responses. Since this is a compressed time frame for the training, down time should be less of a problem but, remember, it could happen.

With a real DPMU to work with, this should be the closest thing to actual response conditions and a valuable team building opportunity.

VAMDC TRAINING

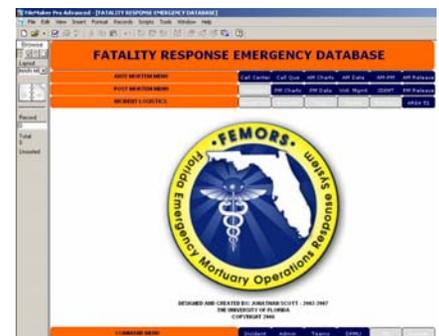
The date for this year's Victim Ante Mortem Data Center Training will be Friday, May 18th at the Embassy Suites near the Orlando Airport.

ODONTOLOGY TRAINING

The date for this year's Odontology Training will be Saturday, May 19th at the Embassy Suites near the Orlando Airport.

FRED DEVELOPMENT

Once the majority of DPMU supplies and equipment were procured and marshaled, Logistics Chief Jonathan Scott was able to focus more of his time on the further development of the Fatality Emergency Response Database (FRED).



While FRED will likely be undergoing minor improvements over time it is now a robust program that will make the management of disaster victim information more meaningful.

It will be used to manage the exercise at the Annual Training session. It includes a Call Center to handle the high initial influx of missing person reports. The ante mortem data side collects the missing person personal data that is used to compare with the data collected during morgue operations on the post mortem side. There are numerous semi-automated search features to narrow potential matches for follow-up by Medical Investigator personnel in the Identification Center.

Be prepared to be wowed by what it can do !

DOH FY 06-07 CONTRACT

The continuing operations contract for FY 06-07 went into effect in January (several months ahead of the past 2 years).

FEMORS also made two requests for additional funding from the unused funds from the FY 05-06 DOH cycle.

The first, as earlier reported, is to supplement the training component of the FY 06-07 budget. While the original request was for \$50,000, DOH elected to increase that request to \$75,000 because UF takes a 25% administrative overhead fee out of all grant monies channeled through the UF system. (Some other grant programs use a 45% fee basis!)

The second request was for \$37,500 to pay for transport, set up and exhibition of the DPMU at the August 2007 Florida Medical Examiners Conference in St. Petersburg. This is an opportunity to exercise all the logistics elements involved in transporting the DPMU, setting it up, displaying it to Medical Examiners, knocking it down and returning it to the warehouse.

Both of these requests were submitted to the Statewide group of Health and Medical Committee Chairs of the 7 Regional Domestic Security Taskforces (RDSTFs). The Committee Chairs agreed to both requests.

The final step now is to secure CDC approval for DOH's plan to redirect these funds to support the FEMORS mission. DOH is still in that final process and a decision is expected within the next month. All fingers are crossed!

DSOC FUNDING CONFERENCE

PROJECT FUNDING REQUESTS

Florida's Domestic Security Oversight Committee (DSOC) conducted its grant funding conference for FY 07-08 January 10-11, 2007 in Orlando. FEMORS had proposed 2 projects to

address identified gaps: body X-ray and sheltering equipment. (These gaps are part of the contract requirements.)

Through a series of committee meetings and vetting sessions, and with the realization that the amount of federal funding continues to be reduced year after year, FEMORS made a good faith effort to be a productive member of the process and withdrew the request for sheltering equipment (\$420,000). Several other projects were also withdrawn or reduced in scope in the same way.

The process of priority ranking of the remaining 45 projects from fire, law enforcement, education, agriculture, health and others was a complex one. The bottom line is that FEMORS' request for the body X-Ray system (\$175,000) ended up ranked #12 on the list of 43 projects. If federal funding exceeds \$14.7 million #12 gets funded. Last year the funding was in the neighborhood of \$24 million. It would take \$37 million to cover all 43 projects this year.

Assuming the X-Ray unit makes the cut, actual purchase will likely take place in the Spring of 2008

SHELTERING EQUIPMENT

One main reason for withdrawing the sheltering equipment request is that DOH and DEM took note of what happened in past hurricanes, especially Katrina. The basic plan now is that a base camp will be deployed upon a major event that compromises local infrastructure as with hurricanes.



Base Camp at Gulfport MS for Katrina

A base camp is a huge air conditioned and heated tented facility centralized to service multiple responder groups to an

area when no hotels are available. It includes sleeping, showers, laundry, and food service areas to provide for the needs of responder groups.

While its not the Hilton, it does become a small city unto itself with security perimeters established. Such a base camp can normally be set up completely within 48 hours.

FEMORS INTERACTIONS

MIMORT ASSISTANCE

In October 2006, Michigan received portable morgue equipment as a result of dedicated federal funding. The Michigan Mortuary Response Team (MIMORT) is now being formed to create a state level response similar to FEMORS. Like many state teams, it began years ago as a Funeral Directors Association and is now working to expand to the multi-disciplinary forensic team model.

For the past few months, FEMORS has shared its experiences, growth problems and development history with the key managers of this Michigan effort. This included saving them time by providing the FEMORS model so they could approach their Department of Health to establish a contract under which they might operate.

HHS FATALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

In December FEMORS was invited to participate in a multi-layered planning session hosted by the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C.

The goal of the 2 day meeting was to draft up a national strategy for fatality management response aligned with the National Response Plan. Several states and federal agencies were represented to consider the many facets of coordinated response. Much more work is needed but a framework for progress was laid out.

FRED DEMO FOR MIAMI-DADE ME

In January, FEMORS member Norm Kassoff arranged for a demonstration of FRED to the information technology team at the District 11 Medical Examiner's Office in Miami.

This short 2 hour demonstration was designed to elicit from the ME office questions about how the data collected in FRED can be transferred to the day-to-day system of the ME office.

The ME's IT team liked what they saw (even stealing a few ideas to incorporate into their existing system.)

NAME INTERIM MEETING

In February, Commander Bedore presented the FEMORS program development history at the National Association of Medical Examiners Interim meeting held in San Antonio. This was in conjunction with the American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Meeting.

The half-day program explored federal response capabilities of the Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services' Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), and state level team preparedness such as FEMORS.

It appears that several states are in various stages of creating state level teams. FEMORS has received inquiries for developmental assistance from organizations in MN, AZ, NC, VA, MI, MS and Puerto Rico.

The interest of the audience was enthusiastic as they (Medical Examiners) were reminded that since all disasters start at the local level, they are the one resource that cannot pass the buck – they will be in charge, like it or not.

SOUTH FLORIDA ME IT MEETING

The January short demonstration of FRED has piqued the interest of multiple Medical Examiner Districts across the Southern tip of Florida. This lead to Norman Kassoff once again

arranging for a joint meeting so all could see FRED in action from initial Call Center intake to data mining with mock disaster data.

That meeting will take place in April the week before Annual Training. The District 11 Medical Examiner's Office in Miami has agreed to host the 30-40 people who will take part from the many agencies. This time an entire day will be spent on FRED so that the export and import requirements of computer systems for all Districts can be tested in real time.

OTHER TRIVIA

There are indications that the Orlando **warehouse may be abandoned** by the State in a year or so. Apparently the Department of Emergency Management is working to secure a large centralized warehouse in Orlando to marshal all state assets in that region. The FEMORS cache will likely be moved to this new location, along with all the other DOH assets currently at the warehouse if that happens.

Efforts will also be undertaken to explore warehousing opportunities in the Gainesville region once again.

The timing and certainty of these events is not yet known.

Kudos to **Dr. William Silver, D.D.S.** who successfully passed the American Board of Forensic Odontology (ABFO) examination in February. This signifies a great level of dedication and achievement in the field. Bill now becomes the 4th ABFO member of FEMORS joining Doctors Barry Lipton, Ed Woolridge, and Jan Westberry.

(If there are other ABFO members among the ranks, please forgive the unintentional omission. Also, let Command know for future reference)

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

Member feedback and suggestions are always welcome and can be delivered to FEMORS staff at the following numbers:

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