

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams

Description: Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs) are composed of personnel within a number of different fields of expertise to provide assistance to local authorities with the remains of the deceased. DMORT personnel can also assist the local Medical Examiner/Coroner in the processing and identification of remains. When deployed to an emergency, DMORT personnel work under the guidance of local authorities (i.e., coroner, medical examiner) to provide technical assistance and personnel to identify and process deceased victims with the ultimate goal of issuing a death certificate and returning the remains to loved ones.

Accessing the Capability: The State, Local, Tribal, or Territorial (SLTT) point of contact to coordinate a request for DMORT support assessments are the ASPR Regional Emergency Coordinators (REC). They will assist the requestor in articulating the requirement and identifying the number and type of DMORT team(s) needed for the response. [Contact information](http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/responders/rec/Pages/contacts.aspx) for RECs is at: <http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/responders/rec/Pages/contacts.aspx>.

DMORTs are officially requested by states' mass fatality coordinator in conjunction with the local medical legal death investigation authority (usually a medical examiner/coroner, public health authority or the state's department of justice) through their states' Emergency Management Coordinator.

Average Time to Respond: Varies dependent on Assessment Team's findings.

Past Customers or Events when capability was deployed: American Samoa 2009; Haiti Earthquake 2010; Joplin, MO Tornado 2011.

Contact Agency or Subject Matter Expert: NDMSHelpdesk@hhs.gov

Additional Information:

There are three specialty DMORTs: Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), Victim Information Center (VIC) team, and DMORT-All Hazards. The Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (DPMUc) is a cache and logistical team equipped to set up, operate, and maintain the Disaster Portable Morgue Units (DPMU). The standard DMORT can staff and operate either a DPMU or another established facility to examine remains. The Victim Information Center (VIC) team can set up and operate in a Family Assistance Center (FAC) to assist state and local authorities collect ante-mortem data for victim identification. The DMORT-All Hazards is discussed below.

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team – All Hazards/WMD: There is a single DMORT that is equipped for processing of human remains that have been contaminated with hazardous chemicals, radiation, or biological agents. The team can be deployed in response to a weapon of mass destruction incident. Team composition is similar to a standard DMORT, except for the addition of hazardous materials/weapons of mass destruction mitigation capability for remains. Unlike standard DMORTs, the DMORT-WMD maintains a specialized equipment cache and a number of support vehicles. Specific DMORT deployment configuration is based upon the particular needs of an incident.

DMORTs typical team composition: medical examiners, coroners, funeral directors, mortuary officers, photographers, medical records technicians/transcribers, forensic specialists (anthropologists, odontologists, pathologists), logistics specialists, security specialists, and computer specialists.

LAST UPDATED: February 17, 2016