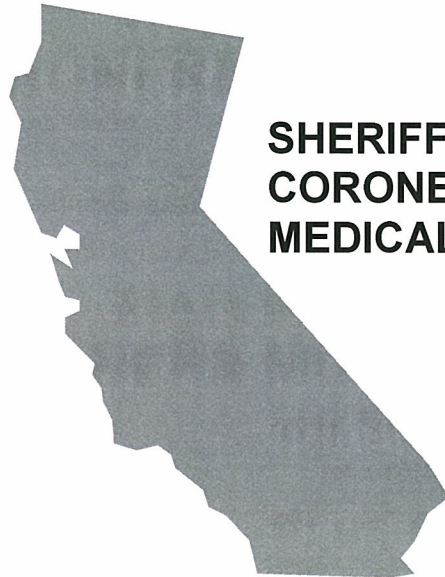




STATE OF CALIFORNIA CORONERS MUTUAL AID PLAN



**SHERIFF/CORONER
CORONER
MEDICAL EXAMINER**

**Law Enforcement Branch
CA Office of Emergency Services**

March 2006



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PREFACE

California is the most disaster-prone state in the nation. Despite this unfortunate title, the state's emergency response system is effective and considered a model for the United States. We have been fortunate over the years to have not experienced disasters, with mass fatalities, that have overwhelmingly taxed our ability to adequately respond. The backbone of our emergency response system is the mutual aid system which is an essential component of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The Coroners Mutual Aid system remains a valuable organization and process that is in place when needed.

However, in order for the Coroners Mutual Aid System to be effective it requires the participants to have a fundamental and sustained working knowledge of the organization and proper procedures and protocols. Occasionally, failures or breakdowns in our response to disasters can be attributed to a lack of knowledge and/or discipline by the responsible agencies in following the mutual aid system. Therefore, it is recommended that departmental staff assigned to perform coroner mutual aid activities be familiar with this plan and its companion documents.

The Coroners Mutual Aid System and Plan is a product of the collective and coordinated effort of the Sheriff/Coroners, Coroners, Medical Examiners, California State Coroners Association, California State Sheriff's Association, and the State Office of Emergency Services, Law Enforcement Branch. Any comments or suggestions in improving this plan are always greatly appreciated.

Finally, it is recognized that the Coroner/Medical Examiner's responsibility of the operational area may reside with a Sheriff or appointed/elected Coroner/Medical Examiner. For the purpose of this plan, the term Coroner/M.E. will represent all three types of coroners in California.

A concise overview of the California Coroners Mutual Aid System has been developed to assist you in quickly referencing key Coroner/M.E. protocols and resources. Please refer to the laminated "Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Quick Reference Guide."



INTRODUCTION

The California Coroner Mutual Aid Plan is a companion of the California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan. Both derive their authority from the California Emergency Services Act and from the State Master Mutual Aid Agreement. The Coroner Mutual Aid Plan describes the statewide Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner, and Medical Examiner organization, mobilization, and functions, as well as other assistance available from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, the California State Coroners Association, and other state agencies, and the resources of the federal government. Mission statements included in this plan provide functional capabilities of the Office of Emergency Services, Department of Justice, California Department of Health Services, California Department of Motor Vehicles, California National Guard, California Dental Identification Team, Department of Homeland Security, and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

BACKGROUND

The Coroner Mutual Aid Plan is intended to complement and support law enforcement activities during major disasters resulting in mass fatalities. The Plan delineates proper procedures for notification and response of coroners under the Coroner Mutual Aid Plan. As a supplement to this plan, the California Coroners Mass Fatalities Operations Guide has been developed to incorporate the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and includes position checklists for the various positions identified for Coroner Operations. The Coroner Mutual Aid Plan supports the California Emergency Plan.

To assure an effective and efficient mutual aid response, the Law Enforcement Branch of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services coordinates all inter-regional; state agency activity relating to mutual aid under the Coroner Mutual Aid Plan; and any out-of-state official request for coroners mutual aid under the nationally recognized Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).



PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to create a standardized and accepted statewide coroner mutual aid system for response and recovery related to major disaster situations resulting in mass fatalities. This system will serve as a guide for mutual aid assistance that supports Coroner/M.E. efforts.

Additionally, this plan provides for coroner mutual aid planning and joint operations; incorporates the Incident Command System (ICS), the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as per California State Law (Government Code Section 8607; California Code of Regulations Title 19, Sections 2920, 2925, 2930 in the Disaster Assistance Act); and integrates those actions with other ongoing disaster and emergency operations.

This plan prescribes the mutual aid organization of coroner/medical examiner personnel that can be tailored to the specific need of the Operational Area or a Region requiring assistance from other Operational Areas or Regions.

AUTHORITY

The State of California Coroner Mutual Aid Plan is developed under the authority of California state law, including: Master Mutual Aid Agreement; California Emergency Services Act (Gov. Code Section 8550 et seq.); California Labor Code, Section 3211.92 (Disaster Services Workers); Sections 2400-2450 of Title 19, Division 2 of the Code of Regulations (Standardized Emergency Management System – SEMS).

NOTE: The California State Coroner Mutual Aid Plan reflects the official policy of the Principals of the California State Coroners Association as consistent and compatible with the Master Mutual Aid Agreement concerning coroner mutual aid planning and operations in California.



DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Note that some definitions are not verbatim from related codes and regulations but are paraphrased for clear understanding of the concepts involved.

Mass Fatality: An incident where more deaths occur than can be handled by local Coroner/M.E. resources.

Operational Area: A County, along with political subdivisions within that county constitutes an Operational Area.

Coordinator of Coroner Functions in an Operational Area: The Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner, or Medical Examiner of the county.

Mutual Aid Region: A Mutual Aid Region is a geographic area comprised of multiple operational areas (see Figure 1). A Mutual Aid Region manages and coordinates information and resources among operational areas within the mutual aid region and between the operational areas and the state level.

Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC): The Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is a state-to-state mutual aid system that can be utilized during a Governor declared state of emergency. EMAC is administered by the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA).

Coordinator of Coroner Functions in a Region: A Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner or Medical Examiner nominated and elected by those vested with coroner responsibility in each Operational Area within that specific Region, to carry out regional Coroner/M.E. mutual aid activities.

State Law Enforcement/Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator: The Chief, Law Enforcement Branch, Office of Emergency Services, through his designated Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator, is responsible for administrative action and coordination between State and Regions and Operational Areas for Coroner Mutual Aid. The State Coordinator also acts as the state point of contact for EMAC requests.

State of War Emergency: "State of war emergency" means the condition which exists immediately, with or without a proclamation thereof by the Governor, whenever this state or nation is attacked by an enemy of the United States, or upon receipt by the state of a warning from the federal government indicating that such an enemy attack is probable or imminent. (Section 8558 (a) GC)



During a state of war emergency the Governor has complete authority over all agencies of state government and the right to exercise within the area or regions designated, all police power vested in the state by the Constitution and laws of the State of California (GC, Article 12, Section 8620 and Article 13, Section 8627, “California Emergency Services Act”). During a state of war emergency mutual aid is mandatory.

State of Emergency: “State of Emergency” means the duly proclaimed existence of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the state caused by such conditions as air pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, drought, sudden and severe energy shortage, plant or animal infestation or disease, the Governor’s warning of an earthquake or volcanic prediction, or an earthquake, or other conditions, other than conditions resulting from a labor controversy or conditions causing a “state of war emergency,” which, by reason of their magnitude, are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of any single county, city and county, or city and require the combined forces of a mutual aid region or regions to combat, or with respect to regulated emergency utilities, a sudden and severe energy shortage requires extraordinary measures beyond the authority vested in the California Public Utilities Commission. (Section 8558 (b)(GC)).

During a state of emergency, the Governor has complete authority over all agencies of state government and the right to exercise within the area or regions designated, all police power vested in the state by the Constitution and laws of the State of California (GC, Article 12, Section 8620 and Article 8627, “California Emergency Services Act”). During a state of emergency mutual aid is mandatory.

Local Emergency: “Local emergency” means the duly proclaimed existence of conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of a county or city, caused by such conditions of air pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, drought, sudden and severe energy shortage, plant or animal infestation or disease, the Governor’s warning of an earthquake or volcanic prediction, or an earthquake, or other conditions, other than conditions resulting from labor controversy, which are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of that political subdivision and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat, or with respect to regulated energy utilities, a sudden and severe energy shortage requires extraordinary measures beyond the authority vested in the California Public Utilities Commission (Section 8558(c),GC).



Law Enforcement Branch: The Law Enforcement Branch of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services is the state facilitator of inter-regional Coroner/M.E. mutual aid response resources to operational areas. The Law Enforcement Branch also provides ongoing liaison with operational areas, municipalities, and state and federal agencies during non-emergency periods to facilitate emergency preparedness planning and mutual aid awareness training. The Branch also coordinates the state's search and rescue and law enforcement mutual aid programs, and other activities in support of local law enforcement mutual aid response.

Unusual Occurrence: An event involving potential or actual personal injury or property damage arising from incidents such as: natural and manmade disasters, acts of terrorism, and civil disturbance.

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT): Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams are comprised of private citizens, each with a particular field of expertise, who are activated in the event of a disaster. DMORT members are required to maintain appropriate certifications and licensure within their discipline. When members are activated, licensure, and certification is recognized by all States, and the team members are compensated for their duty time by the Federal government as a temporary Federal employee. During an emergency response, DMORTs work under the guidance of local authorities by providing technical assistance and personnel to recover, identify, and process deceased victims. DMORT teams are composed of funeral directors, medical examiners, coroners, pathologists, forensic anthropologists, medical records technicians and transcribers, finger print specialists, forensic odontologists, dental assistants, x-ray technicians, mental health specialists, computer professionals, administrative support staff, and security and investigative personnel (www.dmort9.org).

Incident Command System (ICS): The Incident Command System is under the umbrella of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). When applicable jurisdiction is determined, the first Deputy Coroner/Coroner on the scene is the Coroner Incident Commander.

National Incident Management System (NIMS): The National Incident Management System is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines.

Standardized Emergency Management Systems (SEMS): The Standardized Emergency Management System is a system used for coordinating state and local emergency response in California. SEMS provides a multiple level emergency response organization that facilitates the flow of emergency information and resources.



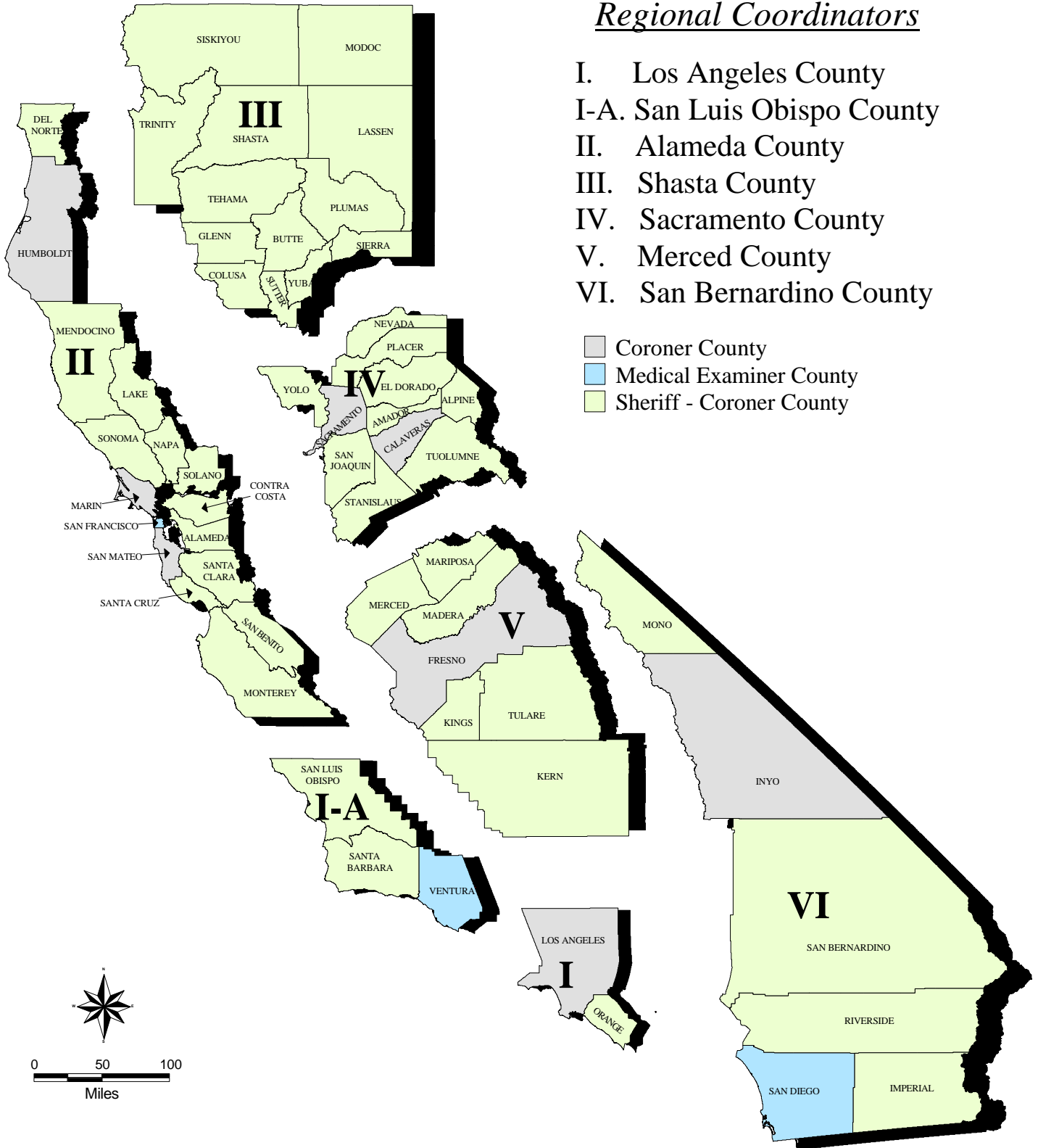
Unified Command: Unified Command is comprised of jurisdictions and agencies that have an implicit/direct responsibility for the incident. The objective and strategy of Unified Command should be to reach consensus in the consolidated action plan for the incident. In this manner, it increases the effectiveness of the response to a multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incident.

Coroner Mutual Aid Regions

Regional Coordinators

- I. Los Angeles County
- I-A. San Luis Obispo County
- II. Alameda County
- III. Shasta County
- IV. Sacramento County
- V. Merced County
- VI. San Bernardino County

- Coroner County
- Medical Examiner County
- Sheriff - Coroner County



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Miles

April 2007



ORGANIZATION FOR MUTUAL AID

The organizational framework for all mutual aid in the State of California is based on levels of increasing responsibility. These levels, lowest to highest, are: a) Operational Areas, b) Regions, c) State, and d) Federal.

Operational Area

Each county in California is an Operational Area, and a Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner, or Medical Examiner is its Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator.

Region

The State of California is divided into seven Coroner Mutual Aid Regions as Figure 1 on the previous page depicts. Each mutual aid region has a duly elected Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner, Medical Examiner, who is elected by the majority of their peers within the Region. Each Coroner Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator should designate, as alternates, two senior officers within their department to function as the Coroner Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator during their absence or their inability to serve.

If the Coroner Regional Coordinator position is vacated for any reason, a Regional Election of all Operational Areas within that Coroners Mutual Aid Region (Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner, or Medical Examiner) will be called within thirty days of such a vacancy by the Chief of the Law Enforcement Branch of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services to choose a new Coroner Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator. If for any reason, a two-thirds majority of Sheriff/Coroners, Coroners, or Medical Examiners in a region desire to hold another regional election, they may make a request for an election to the Chief, Law Enforcement Branch of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, who will then seek nominees and conduct the election. Please refer to the Election Process in Appendix B for further information.

State

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services is responsible for coordination and application of state resources in *support* of local jurisdictions. This office also is responsible for the receipt and dissemination of current information relating to existing or potential major disasters or extraordinary events on which to base coroner mutual aid operations. The Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, through the Chief of the Law Enforcement Branch, and the Chief through his/her assigned staff, has responsibility for coroner mutual aid coordination at the state level.



Out-of-State

While rare, there may be occasion to send Coroner/M.E. personnel and resources to another state under an official EMAC request. The OES Law Enforcement Branch will process and coordinate all Coroner/M.E. EMAC requests.

Federal as represented by the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Federal Bureau Investigation (FBI)

The FEMA is responsible for coordination and application of federal agencies resources, i.e., Disaster Mortuary Response Team (DMORT which is under the agency of the National Disaster Medical System). A federal agency is defined as any department, independent establishment, government, corporation, or other agency of the executive branch of the federal government, including the United States Postal Service, but does not include the American National Red Cross (www.fema.gov).

The FBI may be requested at any time through the nearest FBI field office.



PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING MUTUAL AID

Basic Policy

The Master Mutual Aid Agreement and the California Emergency Services Act make mutual aid mandatory when the Governor proclaims a State of Emergency or State of War Emergency. Mutual aid is also mandatory in situations of “local peril.” The basic policy of regional or state assistance to Operational Areas is to support Coroner/M.E. with resources after all of their resources are committed and the magnitude of the disaster is, or soon will be, beyond their resources and capabilities. Requests for assistance must be made through the appropriate chain of command – Operational Area to Region; Region to California-OES (State); State to other regions and/or Federal Government. Figure 2 on the following page illustrates the proper channels for requesting mutual aid. Requests for Federal resources can be made by the State on behalf of the requestor after consultation with the impacted operational area and Coroner/M.E. and their Regional Coroner/M.E. Coordinator.

Federal resources may be requested at any time during the disaster. However, the impacted operational area Coroner/M.E. should consult with the Regional Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Coordinator and the State OES Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator to determine if the request of a federal resource (e.g., DMORT) is the most appropriate resource given the specific incident.

Channels for Requesting Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid

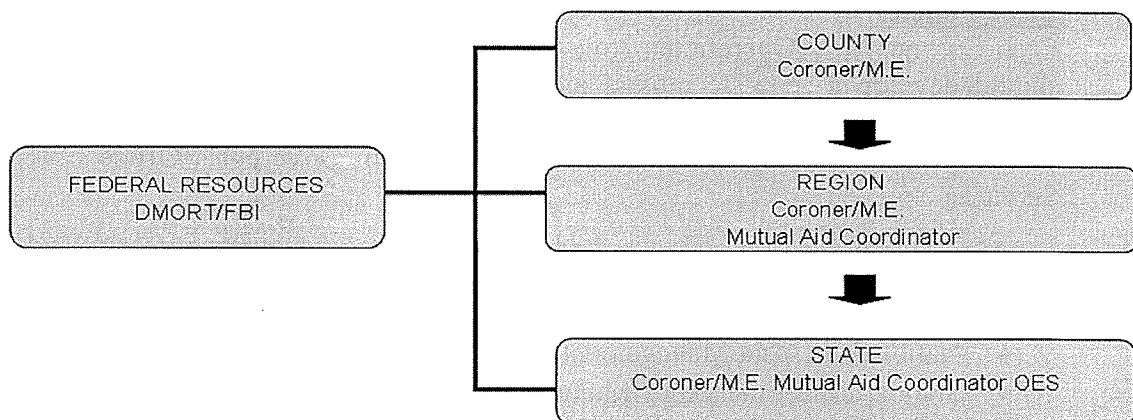


Figure 2



Regional Guidelines

Whenever an existing or unforeseen mass fatalities emergency is of such magnitude as to require resources from one or more operational areas, it is the responsibility of the Coroner Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator to organize and manage the committed resources within their region (Section 26602 of the Government Code). The Coroner Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator must keep the California OES Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator apprised of the situation. Should assistance from adjoining regions become necessary, requests will be made through the California Law Enforcement Branch OES Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator.

State

If the combined resources of regions are not sufficient to cope with an emergency mass fatalities situation, or if such deficiencies are imminent, the State Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator via the Chief, California OES Law Enforcement Branch, through the Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, may request assistance from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency. If Coroner/M.E. resources are needed from other states, the process for obtaining these resources will be requested through the EMAC system.

Federal Assistance

Upon mutual agreement between the impacted operational area, Regional Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator, and the State OES Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator, federal resources may be requested to augment existing coroner mutual aid.

Basic Policies

Each Coroner/M.E. Operational Area and Coroner Region within the State of California should develop a separate mutual aid response plan based on Coroner/M.E. resource capability within that Coroner Operational Area or Coroner Mutual Aid Region and input from the California OES Law Enforcement Branch, Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

The regional plan should adhere to and include:

- California Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid System
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)
- Incident Command System (ICS)
- Communications plan
- Personnel alert procedures
- Resource list

Maximum use of locally existing resources must be made prior to the initiation of a mutual aid request. This is the main tenet of mutual aid operations. The responsible local official in whose jurisdiction the incident occurs will remain in charge. To assure an effective response, maximum effort will be made to provide each successive level of



authority in the Coroner Operational Area and its Region with complete, current, and accurate information relating to emerging situations that may require further mutual aid or state and federal assistance.

Guidance for Mutual Aid Operations

Mutual Aid Operations are based on the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and Incident Command System (ICS). SEMS consists of five functional areas that must be considered for effective management. These functional areas are as follows:

- Management
- Operations
- Planning and Intelligence
- Logistics
- Finance/Administration

For more information on SEMS, see Appendix B.

CORONER/M.E. MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED REMAINS

A mass fatality incident can be an extremely demanding event for a Coroner/M.E. It can be made more complex and difficult to manage when the dead are contaminated and pose health and safety risks to the responding Coroner/M.E personnel. Furthermore, a mass fatality event caused by an act of terrorism creates more jurisdictional issues and requires closer cooperation and assistance among the various health and public safety disciplines at all governmental levels.

Dealing with contaminated remains and rendering them safe to handle is not new to Coroner/M.E.s. However, it is not routine and with the escalation of terrorists' acts throughout the world and in our nation, the potential use of exotic chemical, biological, and radiological agents demands new planning, coordination, and response requirements. Also, it must be considered that the assistance the Coroner/M.E. may have received by hazmat teams and other outside agencies in past contaminated fatality incidents would be fully engaged in life-saving decontamination efforts in the event of a "weapons of mass destruction" type of incident and probably will not be available to assist the Coroner/M.E.

It is not the purpose of this plan nor within the authority of the Office of Emergency Services to prescribe policies, procedures, and resources to the Coroner/M.E to adequately *respond to* and *manage* a contaminated mass fatality incident. Since these types of events start and end locally, it is in the best interests of the local Coroner/M.E. to develop, in coordination with other local, regional, and state organizations, appropriate plans and cooperative agreements.



Each operational area Coroner/M.E. should develop contingency plans that, at a minimum, address the following issues:

- Planning process needs to engage other disciplines (e.g., fire service, EMS, health, law enforcement) and jurisdictions (e.g., city, county, region, state, federal, and private)
- Develop field response protocols for chemical, biological, or radiologically contaminated human remains.
- Identify resources that may be available to assist in the handling and disposition of contaminated remains.
- Proper identification/type and proper use of personal protective equipment for the various WMD types of environments.
- Consideration of jurisdictional issues and handling of the “de facto homicides” in a terrorist-caused mass fatality. Significant law enforcement/criminal justice issues require cooperation and understanding of roles and responsibilities, especially with the FBI; the lead investigatory agency in terrorist incidents.
- Incorporating standards for decontaminating human remains. Who determines how clean is clean?
- Human remain storage capacity of Coroner/M.E. Extraordinary issues pertaining to contaminated remains.
- Disposition of contaminated and/or decontaminated human remains. Consider protocols for cremation, isolated burial, mandatory mass disposition, and return to family.

The Office of Emergency Services, Law Enforcement Branch’s Coroners Mutual Aid Program will endeavor to work closely with the Coroner/M.E. in planning and preparing for mass fatality incidents; including events involving contaminated human remains.

To assist the Coroner/M.E. in preparing for mass fatality incidents involving weapons of mass destruction, an excellent reference publication entitled: “CAPSTONE DOCUMENT: Mass Fatality Management For Incidents Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction”, has been included in an external attachment to this plan.



THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CORONER MUTUAL AID COORDINATOR

The Regional Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Coordinator is a *de facto* member of the California's Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid System's "board of directors." Even more complex than the role of an Operational Area Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Coordinator, the Regional Coordinator must balance not only the needs and resources of his/her own department, but also those of the Operational Area and the other Operational Areas in the Region. He or she is also asked to provide guidance to other agencies in the system at times.

Duties and Responsibilities include:

1. Organizes and acts as chairperson of a Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinating Committee, composed of Operational Area Coroners within the region. This committee may include others as deemed necessary by the chairperson. This committee shall meet at least once each year and may hold additional meetings as deemed necessary by the chairperson.
2. On receipt of information of an emergency within the region which may require Regional Coroners Mutual Aid, or upon request of the State Law Enforcement Coordinator, assumes responsibility for coordination of Regional Coroners Mutual Aid resources.
3. The Coordinator should designate one or more points of contact in his/her agency to assist in coordination of the mutual aid activities of the region.
4. The Regional Coordinator shall evaluate requests for assistance from the operational area; determine the resources from that operational area(s) within the region that can provide the most-timely assistance, and initiate appropriate response thereof. When resources within the region are insufficient, either for lack of timely response or the magnitude of requirements are beyond regional capability, the request must be made to the state.
5. The Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator is not responsible for any direct emergency operations except those which occur within the jurisdiction of its own department, agency, etc. The Operational Area official in whose jurisdiction the emergency exists shall remain in full charge of all coroner resources furnished for mutual aid operations.
6. The Coordinator should assess the region's Coroner/M.E. mutual aid capabilities and be able to communicate this information to the State Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Coordinator.



7. The Regional Coordinator should meet periodically with the Operational Area Coroner/M.E. in his/her Region to exchange information that would enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Coroner/M.E. mutual aid operations.

8. If Federal resources (e.g., DMORT), are requested by the operational area Coroner/M.E., the Regional Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Coordinator will coordinate the consultation meeting/conference call forum with requesting Coroner/M.E., his/herself, and State OES Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator.



STATE AGENCIES ROLES AND RESOURCES

The following state agencies have resources which can be made available during a Mass Fatalities Incident.

Department of Health (DHS)

Under the authority of the State Health and Safety Code Section 103490 (b), the State Registrar shall assist in the notification of spouses or next of kin.

The DHS will assist local government in assessing health hazards and ensuring compliance with health regulations.

The DHS is responsible for ensuring observance of health regulations and policies. To assist in Coroner operations, DHS will provide or assist in providing emergency supplies of death certificates, disposition forms, and training in their use.

The services of DHS should be obtained by contacting the Office of Emergency Services.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Missing/Unidentified Persons Section

The DOJ's Missing/Unidentified Persons Section (MUPS) maintains statewide files containing the physical characteristics, photographs, and dental records of missing and unidentified persons reported to DOJ by law enforcement agencies and county coroners in accordance with mandates contained in Penal Code Sections 14200-14251 and Health & Safety Code section 102870. In the event of a mass disaster where there are believed to be missing persons or unidentified deceased persons, the MUPS can offer the following services to California law enforcement agencies and official emergency services agencies:

- ***Physical identification*** - MUPS compares missing person reports against unidentified person reports, and vice versa, to determine if there are possible matches. Possible matches can be made from comparison of physical characteristics such as hair color, eye color, height and weight, or from comparison of other physical identifiers such as clothing, jewelry, scars or tattoos. MUPS also makes inquiries into a variety of governmental and private databases to find information that may result in the location of missing persons. If any possible matches are made or any information is found, the appropriate law enforcement and emergency services agencies are notified.



- ***Dental identification*** - MUPS classifies, indexes and compares missing person dental records against unidentified person dental records, and vice versa, to determine possible matches. If a possible match is made, the appropriate law enforcement and emergency services agencies are notified.
- ***NCIC searches*** - MUPS possesses expertise regarding the operation of the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) Missing and Unidentified Persons System. The NCIC MUPS contains information regarding missing and/or unidentified persons that is input by law enforcement agencies. MUPS staff can compare this information to locate missing persons and/or identify unidentified deceased persons.

DOJ Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS) Section

The California Department of Justice carries out the constitutional responsibilities of the Office of the Attorney General. The department works 24-hours a day to provide a wide range of support to state and local law enforcement agencies through forensic sciences, criminal investigation, intelligence and training. The Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS) is the scientific arm of the Attorney General's Office, whose mission is to assist the criminal justice system. The BFS maintains 10 full-service crime laboratories throughout California that provide the following forensic services.

- ***Crime Scene Response*** - BFS Scientists provide local law enforcement agencies with on-site investigative support. Full service crime laboratory analysis can be applied to any evidence collected (e.g., chemical analysis, toxicology, firearms examination, toolmark analysis, questioned document examination, etc.). Agencies are provided with reports explaining findings and disposition of evidence and offers expert testimony in court. In the event of a mass disaster, crime scene specialists can assist in the collection and analysis of forensic evidence and human remains. Services include:
- ***Latent Prints*** – Using state-of-the-art crime fighting tools and scientific methods BFS scientists assist in processing major crime scenes. Scientists search crime scenes and evidence for latent prints. In addition to standard black powder dusting methods, cyanocrylate fuming, fluorescent dyes, and high intensity lasers, and other chemicals are used to develop prints on difficult surfaces such as paper, Styrofoam, and duct tape. Sophisticated digital equipment is used to enhance the image quality of marginal latent prints and to document the evidence. Detailed reports are provided explaining examinations, comparisons, and disposition of latent print evidence. Offers expert testimony in court.
- ***Questioned Documents*** – Scientists examine and compare questioned handwriting and printing on documents such as, threatening letters, anonymous notes, and robbery demand notes. Other examinations are conducted on inks, papers, computer printers, copiers, typewriters, ribbons, and charred documents.



Evidence collected at crime scenes are examined and compared to known writings of possible suspects. Scientist use an electrostatic detection apparatus to make indented writings visible and a variety of infrared and ultraviolet light sources for differentiating inks. Detailed reports explaining examinations, comparisons, and disposition of evidence are provided to the client. Scientists provide expert testimony in court.

DNA Analysis

The BFS DNA Laboratory has significant expertise in the analysis of degraded human remains, and the statistical analysis of putative family relationships. DOJ has a strong working relationship with every Coroner/M.E. office in the state, as all are required to submit samples from unidentified persons for DNA analysis. DOJ assists law enforcement and criminal justice agencies investigating missing and unidentified persons through DNA analysis and data comparison. In event of a mass disaster DOJ personnel provide the following services to ensure identifications occur in a timely manner:

- ***Scene Assessment*** - On-site assessment to determine DNA services, personnel, and supplies required to ensure the proper collection of biological evidence necessary for DNA analysis.
- ***Sample Collection of Remains*** - Assist in the coordination, collection, documentation and submission of biological samples from unidentified remains for DNA analysis. Knowledge of the best samples available from partial, decomposed or otherwise compromised human remains can make the difference in the ability to utilize DNA for identification.
- ***Reference (Family Member) Sample Collection*** - Assist in the coordination, collection, documentation and submission of biological samples from family members of missing persons or personal articles belonging to the missing person for DNA analysis.



- ***Family Assistance Center Assistance*** – Provide staff and computerized mass fatalities DNA sample submission tracking system to assist in the Family Assistance Center to ensure proper collection and documentation of family reference samples. To provide the best opportunity for identification it is imperative that collection of biological samples from family members are collected in accordance with DOJ specifications.
- ***DNA Collection Kits*** - Provide DNA collection kits for remains, personal articles from the missing and reference samples from family members of the missing.
- ***DNA Analysis*** –Using state-of-the-art equipment, highly trained DNA scientists perform nuclear and mtDNA analysis and data comparison. Knowledge of the technical tools available for analysis, the inheritance of both sources of DNA (nuclear and mitochondrial) and the statistical weighting of putative matches is critical to making an appropriate comparison and drawing conclusions of identification. BFS also focuses on forensic applications of DNA by analyzing biological evidence seized by law enforcement in criminal cases. The laboratory has an established computerized DNA identification data bank to which evidence analysis results can be compared to identify unknown offenders involved in violent crime cases.
- ***Examination and Findings Reports*** – Detailed reports are provided explaining examinations, comparisons, and disposition of biological evidence.
- ***Court Testimony*** – DNA scientists provide expert testimony in court.
- ***Media Support*** –DNA expert to provide consultation to Coroner/ME to questions from the media pertaining to the DNA methods used to assist in the identification of the victims.
- ***Ongoing Support*** – On-going support of DNA services for the identification of unidentified persons.

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

The California DMV's Information Service Branch will assist in the identification of deceased by providing photographs and thumbprints from its driver license records and vehicle/vessel ownership information from its vehicle registration files.

In addition, the DMV's Information Service Branch will provide assistance to law enforcement agencies during emergencies by performing the following searches:



- **VR Law Search** – A work order processes the search for vehicle/vessel records using a variety of information including the partial license plate number, partial VIN number, and vehicle makes, year, and models.
- **DL Law Search** – Searches on name, partial name, height, weight, color of hair, color of eyes, age, sex, county, etc.
- **DL/ID Card Address Search** – Provides all the names of individuals residing at a specific address as indicated on a DL/ID card.
- **VR or DL ANI Search** – Provides a cross-reference between a driver's name and DL/ID card number or between a registered owner name and vehicle registration.
- **ANI Edit** – Provides a list of names when ANI response or when 16 or more records match the criteria.

The Registration Automation Development Section will perform the following searches:

- **VR Name File Pass** – Provides vehicle description and address information pertaining to a specific name.
- **VR Address File Pass** – Provides vehicle description and name pertaining to a specific address

The Driver License Automation Development Section will perform the following search:

- **Journal Search** – Provides information concerning all inquiries, updates, requests, and responses from the VR, DL, and ANI journal tapes.

National Guard (CNG)

The State Military Department, when authorized by the Governor and requested through OES, may provide personnel and equipment necessary for collection, identification, transportation, and storage of the deceased, as well as a variety of requested support services.

The State Military Department will assist civil authority to discharge lawful responsibilities by performing tasks which are not limited to the protection of life and property, search and rescue, and general logistics.

The Governor, through his Office of Emergency Services, will commit the State Military Department resources in support of local authority under Sections 143 and 146 of the Military and Veterans Code and only upon determination that emergency or highly perilous conditions exist or are imminent.



The State Military Department will support, not supplant, local authorities and will terminate their support at the earliest practical time.

Where military resources are deployed, a military liaison will co-locate with the Incident Commander at the Incident Command Post. Military support will, at all times, remain under the military chain of command. Support may be obtained by officials of local government making a request through the Office of Emergency Services when a disaster or emergency is, or is about to be, beyond the capabilities of local government and all mutual aid resources have been exhausted.



FEDERAL AGENCIES ROLES AND RESOURCES

Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Under Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, (P.L. 93-288 as amended by P.L. 100-707), all requests for a declaration by the President that a major disaster exists shall be made by the Governor of the affected state. Such a request shall be based on a finding that the disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments and the federal assistance is necessary. As part of such request, and as a prerequisite to major disaster assistance under this Act, the Governor shall take appropriate response action under state law and direct execution of the state's emergency plan. The Governor shall furnish information on the nature and amount of state and local resources which have been or will be committed to alleviate the results of the disaster, and shall certify that, for the current disaster, state and local government obligations and expenditures (state commitments must be of significant proportion) will comply with all applicable cost-sharing requirements of this Act. Based on this request, the President may declare that a major disaster or emergency exists.

DMORT

DMORT is a program of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that responds to a mass fatality disaster when requested. They are usually requested when local and state resources have been depleted. They have over 1200 trained volunteers who can respond at a moments notice. They can provide assistance in the following areas:

- Mobile Morgue Operations
- Forensic Examination
- DNA Acquisition
- Remains Identification
- Search and Recovery
- Scene Documentation
- Medical/psychology support
- Embalming/casketing
- Family Assistance Centers
- Antemortem Data Collection
- Postmortem Data Collection
- Records Data Entry
- Database Administration
- Personal Effects Processing
- Coordination Of Release of Remains



- Provide Communication Equipment
- Safety Officers and Specialists

California is in DMORT Region IX. Please refer to www.dmort9.org for more specific information.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

The FBI may assist at any time, free of cost on an approved request for assistance.

Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 0.85P(b), authorizes the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to provide identification assistance in disasters and for other humanitarian purposes, subject to the general supervision of the Attorney General, as part of the U. S. Department of Justice.

Since 1940, the FBI Disaster Squad has provided fingerprint specialists for assistance in printing the deceased at disaster scenes, assistance in collecting antemortem fingerprints of victims, and assistance in identifying friction ridge skin of the deceased. Under certain conditions the Disaster Squad may aid local officials in identifying human physical characteristics and characteristics of jewelry belonging to the unknown deceased persons.

The FBI Disaster Squad is part of the FBI's Laboratory Division, currently located at Quantico, Virginia, and is part of the Latent Print Support Unit

Deployment of the FBI's Disaster Squad requires consent from the disaster scene coroner or medical examiner, a ranking law enforcement or government official, a representative of the National Transportation Safety Board, or a representative of the U.S. Department of State.

Requests for assistance must be made through the nearest FBI field office, or the FBI's Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC) at (202) 323-3300 twenty-four hours per day.



Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)

The EMAC was established in 1996. EMAC is administered by the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). EMAC is a congressionally ratified organization that provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid. Through EMAC, a disaster impacted state can request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently. The EMAC system resolves upfront: liability and reimbursement issues. (www.emacweb.org).

Other Federal Resources

Section 402 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 93-288 as amended by P.L. 100-707) provides that in any major disaster, the President (through FEMA) may direct any federal agency, with or without reimbursement, to utilize its authorities and the resources granted to it under federal law (including personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and managerial, technical and advisory services) in support of state and local assistance efforts. The Federal Bureau of Investigation may assist in the identification of the deceased on its own authority without any declaration or proclamation.

Department of Defense Resources

During the immediate aftermath of an incident, the Governor may request the President to direct the Secretary of Defense to utilize resources of the Department of Defense. The resources can be used for the purpose of performing on public and private lands. This would include any emergency work which is made necessary by such incident and which is essential for the preservation of life and property.



PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

California Coroners

The California State Coroners Association will coordinate with law enforcement and abide by the Coroner Mutual Aid Plan. The association is committed to the exchange of information, expertise, training, and disaster preparation.

California State Sheriff's Association (CSSA) – Coroner Liaison

Due to the significant number of the Sheriff/Coroners in California, the CSSA maintains a coroners committee and representative Sheriff/Coroner to be the committee chairperson and liaison to the State Coroners and their professional association. In addition, the CSSA Coroner's Representative maintains a liaison with the State Office of Emergency Services, Law Enforcement Branch and the California State Coroner's Association.

California Dental Identification Team (CalDIT)

CalDIT provides support to a jurisdiction that may be overwhelmed during a mass disaster involving a large number of deceased persons. In all cases, CalDIT serves at the pleasure of the local Coroner or Medical Examiner and serves to support the forensic odontologist that serves that area.

Funeral Directors Association

The purpose of CFDA is to advocate and provide continuous professional development and enhance the economic viability of member funeral service practitioners in order to provide services as desired by consumers.

CFDA is recognized nationally by the profession for its progressive thinking and the value of its programs and services.

Membership in CFDA offers many benefits which are needed in today's business environment. The members of CFDA have found that the value of their membership exceeds dues paid.



APPENDICES

- A THE NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) AND THE CALIFORNIA STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SEMS)**
- B OVERVIEW OF THE STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SEMS)**
- C ELECTION PROCESS**



APPENDIX A

THE NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) AND THE CALIFORNIA STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SEMS)



THE NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) AND THE CALIFORNIA STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SEMS)

BACKGROUND

On February 28, 2003, President Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Direction-5 (HSPD-5). HSPD-5 directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS). The NIMS provides a consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity. The NIMS provides a flexible framework that facilitates government and private entities at all levels working together through standardized organization structures.

NIMS COMPONENTS

There are six components of NIMS:

- Command and Management
- Preparedness
- Resource Management
- Communications and Information Management
- Supporting Technologies
- Ongoing Management and Maintenance.

THE NIMS INTEGRATION CENTER

The Department of Homeland Security established the NIMS Integration Center (NIC). The center was developed as a centralized point for NIMS program coordination. The role of NIC is to provide strategic direction and oversight of NIMS and provide ongoing review and continual refinement of the system and components

NIMS COMPLIANCE

The NIMS requires Federal departments and agencies to make NIMS compliance by state and local governments a condition for Federal preparedness assistances (grants, contracts, and other activities) by Fiscal Year 2007. Jurisdictions can comply in the short –term by adopting the Incident Command System.

Other aspects of NIMS require additional development by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and refinement to enable full compliance.



NIMS AND SEMS

As a result of the lessons learned from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and the problems identified at the 1991 Oakland Hills fire, the State of California enacted legislation (California Government Code Section 8607) creating the Standardized Emergency Management System or "SEMS".

SEMS is administered by the California Office of Emergency Services.

SEMS is designed to ensure that all public agencies have a common system to utilize in responding to emergencies. The key components of SEMS are:

- Utilization of the Incident Command System (ICS)
- The use of Operational Areas
- Utilization of mutual aid
- Multi-agency coordination

The SEMS Glossary will be updated by the State of California to be compatible with NIMS terminology.

SEMS and NIMS share many traits and goals and are very compatible. This similarity is most evident in the NIMS version of the Incident Command System (ICS) and NIMS' adoption of the concept of mutual aid.

For more detailed information on NIMS And SEMS, please go to: www.oes.ca.gov.



APPENDIX B

OVERVIEW OF THE STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SEMS)



OVERVIEW OF THE STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) is the emergency management organization required by California statute, Government Code 8607(a) for emergency response and disaster management in multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction emergencies. California local governments *must* use SEMS in emergency response and disaster management to be eligible for any available disaster reimbursement funding for its personnel related costs provided through state disaster assistance programs. The Standard Emergency Management System (SEMS) incorporates the use of:

The Incident Command System: Field level emergency management response system and organization.

Multi/Inter-agency Coordination: The participation of agencies and disciplines involved at any level of the SEMS organization working together in a coordinated effort to facilitate decisions for overall emergency response activities, including the sharing of critical resources and the prioritization of incidents.

Mutual Aid Systems: Voluntarily provided local government services, resources and facilities when emergency impacted jurisdiction resources are exhausted or inadequate.

The Operational Area Concept: The management and application of resources of all political subdivisions (cities and special districts) of a county.

PURPOSE OF SEMS

SEMS was established to provide an effective and coordinated response to multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional emergencies in California. By standardizing key components of the emergency management system, SEMS is intended to:

- Facilitate the flow of information within and between all levels of the system.
- Facilitate interaction and coordination among all responding agencies.

The use of SEMS will improve the processes of mobilization, deployment, tracking, and demobilization of needed mutual aid resources.

The use of SEMS will reduce the incidence of ineffective coordination and communications, and avoid duplication of resource ordering in multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction response actions.

SEMS is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the varied types of disasters that occur in California and to meet the needs of all emergency responders.



LEVELS OF SEMS

SEMS provides for five distinct organizational levels of emergency response and disaster management and which may be activated as necessary:

- Field Response
- Local Government
- Operational Area
- Regional
- State

Field Response Level: Emergency response level where personnel and resources carry out tactical decisions and activities under the command of an appropriate authority in direct response to an incident or threat.

Local Government Level: The level that includes cities, counties, and special districts. Local governments manage and coordinate the overall emergency response and recovery activities within their jurisdiction.

Operational Area Level: An intermediate level of the state's emergency services organization, which includes the county and all political subdivisions situated within the county. The operational area manages and/or coordinates information, resources, and priorities among local governments within the Operational Area and serves as the coordination and communication link between the local government level and the regional level.

Regional Level: The level that manages and coordinates information and resources among operational areas within the mutual aid region and between the operational areas and the state level. This level also coordinates overall state agency support for emergency response activities within the region.

State Level: The level that manages state resources in response to emergency needs of the other levels, and manages and coordinates mutual aid among the mutual aid regions and between the regional level and the state level. State level also serves as the initial coordination and communication link with the federal response system.



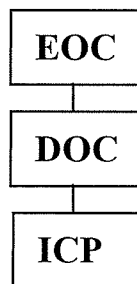
COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTERS (EOC), DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS CENTERS (DOC) AND INCIDENT COMMANDER (IC)

SEMS regulations require that upon activation of a Local Government EOC, communications and coordination will be established between the Incident Commander and the response Department's Operations Center to the EOC, or directly between the Incident Commander and the Local Government EOC.

The regulations further require that communications and coordination be established between an activated Local Government EOC and any state or local emergency response agency having responsibilities at an incident occurring within that local government's jurisdictional boundary.

ICS field response organizations must establish communications with the local government level. The jurisdiction's dispatching procedures, communication capabilities, and local policies, will determine how the field level is linked to the local government level.

In many instances, the ICS field response units will be linked primarily to its Department's Operations Center (DOC) having jurisdictional responsibility for the incident. In such cases, the DOC retains agency-level authority over their assigned Incident Commander(s). The DOC is then responsible for coordinating with the Local Government EOC.



In some incidents, ICS field response organizations may have a direct communications link with the Local Government EOC when it is activated. The ICS field unit may receive policy direction from the Local Government EOC in certain circumstances. Whether this direct linkage occurs will depend upon the size of the emergency event, existing policies of the jurisdiction and the available lines of communication.



ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

SEMS has five essential functions adopted from the Incident Command System. The field response level uses the five primary ICS functions:

- Command
- Operations
- Planning / Intelligence
- Logistics
- Finance / Administration

At the Local Government, Operational Area, Regional and State levels, the term *management* is appropriately substituted for the term *command*. The titles given the other functions remain the same at all levels.

The concept of using this structure within the SEMS Field Response organization is based on the following:

- Develop the form of the organization to match the function or task to be performed.
- Staff only those functional elements that are required to perform the task.
- Observe the recommended span-of-control guidelines.
- Perform the function of any non-activated organizational element at the next highest level.
- Deactivate elements no longer required by the incident.

COMMON FEATURES OF ALL ORGANIZATIONAL/RESPONSE LEVELS

SEMS has several features based on ICS. The field response level uses functions, principles, and components of ICS as required in SEMS regulations.

Many of these field response level features also are applicable at local government, operational area, regional and state levels. In addition, there are other ICS features that have application to all SEMS levels.

Listed below are the features of ICS which are applicable to all SEMS levels.

- Organizational Flexibility / Modular Organization
- Organizational Unity and Hierarchy of Command/Management
- Manageable Span of Control
- Personnel Accountability
- Common Terminology
- Compressive Resource Management
- Integrated Communications
- Action Planning



**SEMS Functions and The Incident Command System
Field Level Response**

PRIMARY SEMS/ICS FUNCTION	FIELD RESPONSE LEVEL	EOC LEVELS
Command/ Management	<u>Command</u> is responsible for the directing, ordering, and/or controlling of resources by virtue of explicit legal, agency or delegated authority.	<u>Management</u> is responsible for overall emergency policy and coordination through the joint efforts of governmental agencies and private organizations.
Operations	Responsible for the coordinated tactical response of all field operations directly applicable to, or in support of, the missions(s) in accordance with the Incident Action Plan.	Responsible for coordinating all jurisdictional operations in support of the response to the emergency through implementation of the organizational level's action plan.
Planning/ Intelligence	Responsible for the collection, evaluation, documentation, and use of information about the development of the incident, and the status of resources.	Responsible for collecting, evaluating, and disseminating information; developing the organizational level's action plan in coordination with the other functions, and maintaining documentation.
Logistics	Responsible for providing facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials in support of the incident.	Responsible for providing facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials.
Finance/ Administration	Responsible for all financial and cost analysis aspects of the incident, and for any administrative aspects not handled by the other functions.	Responsible for financial activities and administrative aspects not assigned to the other functions.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT OR OPERATIONAL AREA EOC

FUNCTION	STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS
Management	City/County administrative personnel, emergency management, fire, law enforcement is recommended for use in initial EOC activations.
Operations	Fire, and/or law enforcement, or emergency management generally will coordinate these activities within the EOC during initial activations.
Planning/ Intelligence	Emergency Management, CAO, fire, law enforcement, planning department., and other departments can contribute personnel depending upon the nature of the emergency.
Logistics	Departments of General Services, or Public Works are good candidates to provide personnel for this EOC function. Other departments also may have the background to manage or assist in this function.
Finance/ Administration	City/County CAO, finance Departments are candidates for managing this function within an EOC.

REGIONAL/STATE EOC

FUNCTION	STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS
Management	<u>SOC Director</u> - OES Director, Chief Deputy Director, Deputy Directors. REOC Director - Regional Administrators
Operations	To fill Section/Branch Positions: OES, CDF, Fire Marshal, CALEPA, DHS, CHP, CNG, EMSA, Mental Health, DSS, ARC, OSHPD, PUC, etc.
Planning/ Intelligence	OES Staff, CDF, CNG, CALTRANS plus Technical Advisors as necessary from CDMG, DHS, etc.
Logistics	To fill Section/Branch Positions: General Services, OES, CDF, CNG, DPA, EDD
Finance/ Administration	OES, Dept. of Finance



APPENDIX C

ELECTION PROCESS



ELECTION PROCESS

REGIONAL CORONER/MEDICAL EXAMINER MUTUAL AID COORDINATOR

1. INTRODUCTION

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Law Enforcement Branch, is charged with the coordination and implementation of Coroners Mutual Aid activities during multi-jurisdictional/multi-incident emergencies. Over the years, a system to accomplish the dispatch and utilization of mutual aid resources has been developed to meet the specific needs of the coroners/medical examiners services. This office is responsible for overall coordination and management of the "system."

Any organization, by virtue of large numbers of individual units or geographical expanse, must contain a recognized chain of command to operate effectively. For this reason, responsibility for monitoring Coroner/M.E. activities within each Region is vested in a Regional Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator, who, in turn, works with the Operational Area Coroner.

Much of the success of any "system" depends upon the capability of the individuals serving at the various levels in the chain of command, and acceptance by their peers. Since this "system" belongs to the sheriff/coroners/medical examiner service, it is appropriate that California's sheriff/coroner/medical examiner has a voice in the selection of the Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinators.

2. PREREQUISITE

In order to maintain the integrity of the Coroners Mutual Aid System, the following prerequisite shall apply:

Operational Area Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator shall be the Sheriff/Coroner/Medical Examiner of the Operational Area, and shall be a participative member of the California Coroners Mutual Aid System.

Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator shall be a Sheriff/Coroner/Medical Examiner in an Operational Area within the Mutual Aid Region.



3. **TERM**

Elections for Regional Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinators may be conducted at least once every four years depending on the outcome of the Sheriff/Coroner election.

4. **VACANCY/EXPIRED TERM (REGION)**

When a vacancy occurs or term expires for a Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator, the State Law Enforcement Coordinator (Chief, OES Law Enforcement Branch) shall notify each Operational Area Coroner/Medical Examiner within the respective region that an election is pending and will solicit nominations for the position. During a vacant period the Coroners Mutual Aid will appoint on an interim basis, an "Acting" Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator to serve until the formal election process is completed.

5. **NOMINATIONS (REGION)**

Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinators are nominated by the Operational Area Coroners within the mutual aid region. The State Law Enforcement Coordinator will solicit nominations from each Operational Area Coroner within the region.

6. **ELECTION PROCESS (REGION)**

Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator elections will be conducted by mail-out ballot, or at a special meeting called by the State Law Enforcement Coordinator. Names appearing on a mail out ballot will be as submitted by the Operational Area Coroners. If all the nominations are for the same individual, that person shall be declared elected.

7. **DEFINITIONS**

- a) Operational Area - An intermediate level of the State Law Enforcement/Coroners Mutual Aid organization, consisting of a county and all political subdivisions therein.
- b) Mutual Aid Region - A subdivision of the State's Law Enforcement/Coroners Mutual Aid organization, established to facilitate the coordination of mutual aid and other emergency operations within a geographical area of the State, consisting of two or more county operational areas.

