



D16 The Variable Role of Kenyon Worldwide Emergency Services in the Mass Disaster Context

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Attendees will learn the variable role of the large scale mass disaster response organization, and highlight the role of interdisciplinary cooperation in this process. This presentation will impact the forensic community by making the forensic community aware of the variability that characterizes mass disasters, and the flexibility, in logistics, personnel, and protocol required to successfully adapt to this variation.

The efficient investigation of mass casualty incidents is dependant on the effective consultation of experts from a variety of disciplines that may include family assistance, crisis intervention, logistics, forensic investigation, forensic pathology, forensic anthropology, morgue technicians, and others. Every disaster is different and the coordinated adjustment of personnel in response to this variation can both expedite and increase the accuracy of the recovery, identification, and repatriation processes. This poster will use two recent disasters, the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, and the recent Indian Ocean Tsunami in Phuket, Thailand to illustrate the broad circumstantial variation that characterizes mass casualty situations; including discussions of variation in the scale of the events, logistical concerns, jurisdictional issues, and the issue of the taphonomic variation that distinguish the two events much of which is related to the distinction between man made and natural disasters.

Kenyon Worldwide Disaster Management is an international corporation whose mandate is to provide services in the wake of mass fatality incidents that include search and recovery of remains and personal effects, establishment and operation of mobile morgues, preparation, and preservation of remains both for repatriation and subsequent analysis, receipt and processing of personal effects, liaison and cooperation with law enforcement and emergency response agencies, and memorialization. Kenyon maintains a directory of experts of various specialties who can be deployed on short notice to fulfill roles in support of local agencies. The combination of those deployed is dependent on the circumstances of event and the needs of the client. In both New York and Thailand, Kenyon provided support in the form of logistics and personnel. This support was manifested in very different ways, however, as a result of the complex interaction of local resources and the specific circumstances of each disaster. For example, the city of New York maintained a contingency plan according to which the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner responded to the events of September 11th, 2001, and contracted Kenyon for additional support in the fulfillment of very specific goals in the investigation. The major role of Kenyon was as a provider of 1) expert personnel, including mortuary experts, and physical anthropologists, and 2) technology in the form of a technique by which the remains from the Trade Center were preserved for curing in a manner that is both economically feasible and effective for the preservation of potential DNA evidence. In addition, at the request of the Thai government, under the direction of the Australian government, Kenyon provided technical and administrative support in the Thai Tsunami Victim Identification Center. This information management center became the nerve center for all antemortem and postmortem record collection and reconciliation of records to determine positive identification of victims.

Specifically, this poster will include a written discussion of Kenyon's responses to these two incidents, and details regarding the complex cooperation between Kenyon and other agencies. The poster will begin by detailing the very specific differences between these two situations, including the fact that one was the result of deliberate human intent, and the other an act of nature. The taphonomic results of that distinction will also be discussed. Another distinction is the difference in the geographic scale of the two events and the associated jurisdictional implications. It will also include a graphical presentation (in the form of a tree diagram) of the structure that each deployment adopted as far as personnel, equipment, liaison activities, technical support etc.

This poster will benefit members of law enforcement, and management of emergency response agencies who are interested in developing contingency plans in the event of mass disasters. This benefit will come in the form of both sample data from which these plans can be developed as well as a demonstration of the extent to which the circumstances of a mass disaster can dictate the best response to it. It is also of a broader interest to the forensic scientist, particularly those interested in involvement in mass disaster investigation and response.

Mass Disaster, Disaster Response, Forensic Scientist