



E55 A Comprehensive Schematic for Postmortem Fingerprint Stations at Mass Fatality Incidents

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Learning Overview: After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand how to set up a comprehensive disaster morgue fingerprint station for Postmortem (PM) fingerprint recovery during Mass Fatality Incidents (MFIs). A schematic of the fingerprint station will be displayed, along with various types of supplies and equipment that may be used for obtaining examination-quality fingerprint records from Unidentified Human Remains (UHR). Incorporating the highlighted equipment and supplies into disaster morgue operations may help identify many of the UHR that are processed during MFIs. Not only will identification of UHR yield valuable investigative information, but it will also allow for the notification of next-of-kin regarding the fate of their family member.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by helping further the ability of forensic and emergency management professionals to enhance disaster morgue operations by utilizing the comprehensive PM fingerprint station to efficiently and effectively handle fingerprint identification matters during disasters, especially for agencies exhibiting a high caseload during MFIs, when time and resources are significantly limited. This presentation will provide the specific resources needed to set up the presented PM fingerprint station during MFIs.

The use of fingerprints for forensic identification is a rapid, reliable, and cost-effective means to identify UHR. The use of friction ridge impressions for forensic identification during MFIs is well established in forensic science. However, the most efficient workflow for PM fingerprint recovery in a disaster morgue setting can be complex, often requiring the need for a more comprehensive and complete PM fingerprint station containing various specialized equipment and supplies. Factors such as the scale and nature of the incident, condition of the various remains, and condition of the friction ridge skin on each decedent are rarely uniform and often unexpected. These factors will dictate which methods must be used to successfully enhance and record any valuable friction ridge information. As a result, multiple techniques exhibiting varying complexities may be used with each set of remains. The wide range of techniques include, but are not limited to, the reconditioning of skin using tissue injection, soaking/rehydration, boiling, manipulation of degloved epidermal skin, as well as recording techniques, such as ink/card, fingerprint powder/adhesive lifter/acetate sheet, fingerprint powder/castings, photography, and digital scanning. As such, the appropriate supplies and equipment for each of the various techniques should be readily available in the disaster morgue. This can be accomplished by following the schematic and creating a comprehensive inventory of PM fingerprint recovery supplies and equipment that can be rapidly deployed during MFI disaster morgue operations.

Postmortem Fingerprint Recovery, Mass Fatality Incidents, Forensic Identification