

OSAC is Back! (OSAC = Organization of Scientific Area Committees)

NAME OSAC UPDATE #7: ANSI/ASB Best Practice Recommendation 008, 1st edition. 2021

Mass Fatality Scene Processing: Best Practice Recommendations for the Medicolegal Authority

This Standard Guide was developed by the Disaster Victim Identification Consensus body of the AAFS Standards Board. This is an extensive reference that advises on best practices. These recommendations should be useful to NAME members who are writing, reviewing, or updating a mass fatality plan. AAFS has developed checklists for many of the OSAC documents. The AAFS checklist for this document is very detailed. (see link below).

This is a brief summary of ANSI/ASB Best Practice Recommendation 008, and as such may leave out or misinterpret important details. See link to full document (below).

FORWARD: Notes the importance of being proactive in developing capabilities and capacities for mass fatality search and recovery. Later in the document (3.12 Unacceptable practices) the unacceptable practice of responding to a disaster scene without a comprehensive search and recovery protocol is listed as #1. Correct identification of decedents begins at the recovery site.

SCOPE: “This document provides definitions, guidelines, and best practices for the detection, processing, and recovery of physical and contextual evidence associated with mass fatality disaster scenes to ensure that evidence is carefully and consistently documented and recovered in situ.”

“Practitioners should implement these guidelines and best practices when applicable, practical, and appropriate.”

HIGHLIGHTS:

3.3.2 Management—a health and safety manager shall be appointed.

3.4.1—Developing a plan: fits into Incident Command System (ICS); includes a well-documented inventory of personnel and equipment; has general recovery protocols for probative evidence.

3.5.2—Collect Critical Incident Information: Verify the disaster location, identify a point of contact, estimate number and general condition of human remains

3.5.3—and 3.5.4 Conduct scene reconnaissance and assess risks

3.5.6 Establish a reasonable numbering system, and determine how to number largely intact remains, versus dissociated body parts, versus highly fragmented remains.

3.5.7 Establish regular meeting times for incident command

3.6.2 Establish badging/credentialing procedures

3.6.5 Establish remains collection points

3.7.1.2 ---3.9.6: Describes systemic search strategies and includes advice such as how to divide the scene into manageable search units. Includes roles of search and recovery teams, and search, investigative, photography, excavation, and mapping procedures.

Annex A: Provides best practices for quality assurance and control in mass fatality scene processing.

Full Document: <https://www.aafs.org/asb-standard/mass-fatality-scene-processing-best-practice-recommendations-medicolegal-authority>

Checklist:

https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/MDI_ANSIASB%20008_Checklist%20V1.2.xlsx